TUESDAY 14 JANUARY 1997

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Major vows to thwart coup by Tory right

Anthony Bevins

John Major will block any right-wing attempt to force a Conservative leadership challenge this summer even if he loses an early election.

A senior party source said last night that Mr Major would do his utmost to thwart a right-wing take-over of the party and would resist plans to whip up a stampede in favour of challengers such as John Redwood or Michael Portillo.

Speculation that the Prime Minister was preparing for a snap poll in March or early April was rife as the Commons returned from its pro-

longed Christmas break yesterday.

A Conservative "pre-election rally" is planned for Saturday to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of independence for India and Pakistan - seven months before the

actual birthday on 15 August.
And with the Tory election juggernaut trundling along at an accelerating pace, the party yesterday advanced its Weish conference by four months from the scheduled date of 13 June to 14 February, St Valentine's

it to the Indian sub-continent today, is expected to address both conferences as part of the election build-up.

One argument that has been used against an early poll is that it would open the way for an early leadership challenge by supporters of Mr Redwood and other Tory right-wingers.

But the senior source told The In-

dependent last night that the leader-

effective veto over any right-wing attempt to stampede the party into a rush decision on his replacement in

the event of an election defeat. Under the rules, a leadership election can only be forced if 10 per cent of the party's MPs call for a ballot within three to six months of the general election. The rules state that if 10 per cent of the new Parliament's MPs demand a ballot it must be held "not earlier than three months and not later than six months from the date of assembly of that Parliament".

Some right-wingers believed that meant there could be a leadership challenge to Mr Major in July if a gen-eral election was held in March or early April.

But the rules then add that the chairman of the backbench 1922 Committee, who is responsible for the conduct of all ballots, shall tell the leader an election is required, "and together they shall determine the actual date".

This critical escape clause provides Mr Major with the essential delaying power to stall a leadership ballot until the following October, even if he decides on a March general election. In the view of Mr. Major's friends, that Mr Major, who returns from a vis- would give the party enough time to over the party. Senior Conservatives believe Mr Major has no intention of resigning the leadership immediately in the event of an election defeat, as the former Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, did in 1992.

Mr Kinnock announced his resignation as Labour leader on the Monday after polling day, unlike Michael ship election rules gave Mr Major an Foot, who had held on until the

general election defeat in 1983. The Foot precedent is favoured by the

Major camp.
Yesterday, Michael Heseltine, the
Deputy Prime Minister, and Brian
Mawhinney, the party chairman,
maintained the election momentum at a press conference.

They said a threatened legal chal-lenge to Labour's proposed "windfall tax" on the privatised public utilities left a £1.8bn "black hole" in Labour's spending plans. Mr Heseltine said Labour could only have received legal advice that it could go ahead with the tax on the basis of firm factual definitions about the companies that would be targeted and the "excess profits" that would be subjected to the tax. He said if Labour had the answers to those questions, it should publish them. A party strategist said last night that the Tories would continue to pile pressure on the windfall tax, which Mr Major yesterday described as "a pig's breakfast".

Speculation about the election timetable date was rife at Westminster yesterday, with 20 March and 10 April remaining the favoured alternatives to 1 May.

Mr Major would need to call a 20 thwart right-wing ambitions to take March election by 24 February and 12 March would be the last day for the announcement of a 10 April poll, after which 1 May would be the only possible alternative.

A Labour source said last night they were sceptical about Mr Mawhinney's promise that the Wirral South by-election would be called by 3 February,



within three months of the death of the Conservative MP, Barry Porter.

Anything for a vote: The Prime Minister wearing a tribal turban presented to him by the Afridi tribesmen of Pakistan's north-west the Conservative MP, Barry Porter.

Anything for a vote: The Prime Minister wearing a tribal turban presented to him by the Afridi tribesmen of Pakistan's north-west the Conservative MP, Barry Porter.

Photograph: AF

Kilroy guests square up to Max factor

Jojo Moyes

It was the kind of story that Max Clifford would have loved to sell. A television brawl between a controversial publicist and a Conservative MP making victims of the daughter of the Deputy Prime Minister, a Labour MP and a right-wing po-litical columnist, and halted by. of all people, Derek Hatton, former deputy leader of Liverpool City Council.
Yet this one involved Mr

Clifford himself, when yesterday's Kilroy debate on BBC1 on the allegations surrounding the Tory MP Jerry Hayes became a little more heated than

According to a spokesman for Kilroy Television, Mr Clif-ford, who publicised the allegations about a relationship between Mr Hayes and a young male researcher, and the Conservative MP Roger Gale began



Derek Hatton restrains Max Clifford after the confrontation that left Annabel Heseltine and Roger Gale (right) shaken "staring each other out" before the programme began.
"All of a sudden Max lunged

Daily Telegraph and some water forward from his seat and sat went over Margaret Hodge. right in front of Roger. They were nose to nose snarling at There was a mêlée. Max threw each other. We tried to interhis arms out and accidentally vene and then Derek Hatton caught Annabel [Heseltine] on the arm. This was happening said to Max, If you want a scrap,



The programme, described as "somewhat heated", went ahead, with a BBC spokesman commenting, "It always gets quite frisky Last night Mr Clifford, who

scrap me'," he said. "When Derek jumped in he accidentally nudged Boris Johnson of the cancelled." minutes before we went on air. Everybody thought it was going to be cancelled." recently announced a personal evendetta against the Government, and Mr Gale were still at loggerheads, over who started

the altercation. "I am told that he said that if I was in the same studio he would hit me" Mr Gale said. "I

physically intimidate me.

"But I am not the easiest person in the world to be intimidated. I have been critical of him in the past and shall continue to be in the future. He has certainly got an attitude problem and he does not like Tory MPs."

Mr Clifford denied trying to punch anyone. He said he crossed the studio to confront Mr Gale when he spotted the MP mouthing words at him. "He was either blowing me kisses or saying something," he said. "I don't think he was blowing me kisses. I've told him before I think he's utterly repulsive. There's no love lost

between us." Mr Hatton, not generally known for his mediation skills said of his role: "I always step in to make sure peace and tranquillity are around. I just wanted to make sure everything was friendly."

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US link to bombs Letter bombs found in the UN one sent to a newspaper office the West Bank.

Stalemate broken A compromise is likely bein New York were linked with tween Israel and the PLO for total military withdrawal from

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'Redneck' rockets to the top prize

T starred last night, I shone: I was footwork and firework in one,

a rocket that wriggled up and shot darkness with a parasol of brilliants. and a peewee descant on a flung bit; Lwas busters of glitter-bombs expanding to mantle and aurora from a crown, I was fouettés, falls of blazing paint, para-flares spot-welding cloudy heaven, foose gold off fierce toeholds of white, a finale red-tongued as a haka leap: and too was a butt of all right!

As usual after any triumph, I was Of course inconsolable:

This poem, called "Performance", is from Les Murray's collection Subhuman Redneck Poems which yesterday won the £5,000 TS Eliot Prize for poetry.

Full report and an appreciation of

Millennium Exhibition could be scrapped

Christian Wolmar Westminster Correspondent

Plans for the Millennium Exhibition have been drastically reined back by £120m amid growing concerns on the Tory backbenchers over whether it should go ahead at all.

Even as the new budget of £580m, including a £200m grant from lottery funds, was being presented to the Millennium Commission for approval yesterday, several backbenchers expressed doubts. Tim Devlin, Tory MP for Stockton South said: "Why not instead promise every town above a certain size a swimming pool, or a small concert hall, ensuring that the money is spread

David Wilshire, Tory MP for Spelthorne, agreed. "I feel a sense of unease over so much money going to one project in London, which gets so much Murray's work, page 5 already," he said. "A lot of people are a private commercial outfit.

concerned about these grandiose projects, particularly when business has not come forward to support them. You could spend £1m on 200 different schemes which would make a real difference to lots of communities. I'd be staggered if somebody didn't raise this point when the issue comes to the

The revised budget will be presented to ministers and to Jack Cunningham, the Labour Party's National Heritage spokesman by Jenny Page, who is now the chief executive of the Millennium Commission but will take over the running of the exhibition if it goes ahead.

In the new budget, building costs of £90m for a pier, covered walkways and extra pavilions have been cut. In addition £40m has been taken out of the estimates for operating costs, partly because the project will now be run directly by the Government rather than as

The projected number of visitors to the dome at Greenwich has been reduced from 13 million to 10 million, reducing the estimated income from £300m to £170m. The earlier budget suggested that there could be losses of up to £400m if there was bad weather or building cost overruns. This has been reduced to a maximum of £200m.

A spokesman for the Millennium Central, which is to run the Exhibition, said: "We expect maximum losses of £60m, and if the visitor numbers are higher than expected, there could be a tidy profit."

However, the private sector has so far promised less than £50m of the £150m it was expected to contribute and Millennium Central sources admit funding will be much more difficult owing to the uncertainty of the past months,

Ms Page is meeting Mr Cunningham tomorrow. His agreement is vital for the future of the Exhibition as without it, private sponsors will not put money in.

"Grrrr!" I said to the man next to me in the Press gallery, as he. cordially wished me a Happy New Year, Happy New Year in-deed! Welcome back to the Gothic fairyland of Lady Olga Maitland, environment questions with Frank Dobson versus John Gummer, and adjournment debates on Angle-Maltese relationships.

Listen for the millionth time as Ribble rent-a-quote, Nigel Evans, invokes the satanic Labour trio of the social chapter, the minimum wage and Hecate. Eel-Goddess of the Lower Depths.

Watch as a uniformly short-bearded New Labourite ingra-tiates himself with his whips by stating that this, that, or the other is a "disgrace" or "obscenity", without once feeling any obligation to suggest a remedy.



The House is unrelentingly male – in the first hour, three dozen men spoke, but only two women

Fortunately, the year's business kicked off with transport questions, which tends to attract a slightly better class of question-and-answer than other question-times. The ministers are decent, if dull, and the MPs inclined to raise local concerns about which they actually know something: their new by-pass. their airport extension, their railway's rolling-stock. And, of course, bicycles - which exert a particular fascination for New Labour backbenchers.

Clive Soley (Hammersmith) revealed that be took his life in his hands every time he node

his hands every time he rode from home to House. "I feel like a by-election waiting to happen," he told alarmed colleagues. You could see Opposition members (who are desperate for an election) planning invitations to Conservative MPs to join them

on exciting two-wheel tours of Hyde Park Corner and the North Circular Road.

But even this sounds safer than travelling by London Underground, given who might be driving the trains. In the course of one of his obsequious compliments to ministers (this time on levels of investment in the tube), John Marshall (Hendon South) told the House that he spoke "as one who has actually been at the controls of one of the new trains".

Mr Marshall in sole-charge of a mouth is bad enough, but im-agine boarding a Northern line train at Hendon and discovering - after travelling at breakneck speed for several miles through a dark and smelly tun-nel - that you are five miles up the back passage of the Chief Whip. You'd want a refund.

ing maleness of the place. In the first hour of parliamentary time in 1997, three dozen men spoke - but only two women: Glenda Jackson and Speaker Betty.

This thought struck me hardest when I was scanning the three grey-clad ministers on the government front-bench. To the left and right were the rounded, crumpled figures of John Watts and John Bowis. And between these twin roundities flopped the long, and slightly limp form of Sec-retary of State for Transport, Sir George Young. The whole living sculpture was like a stone-age depiction of a failing fertility god.

Can anything be done? Yes, apparently. The subject was

But what really strikes me raised later on of the lack of every time I return to the House after a recess, is the unrelent-available to those visiting the House - schoolchildren from the West country couldn't get orangeade after a long journey. But Peter Viggers (Conserva-tive, Gosport), had the answer.

Other countries with lesser parliamentary traditions than ours," he began - with effort-less pomposity - "have muse-ums associated with their parliaments."

the public and other such boipolloi could go, rather than clog up the real thing. Perhaps it was time that Britain too, had both a Parliament and a parliamen-

Goddammit, I thought, old Viggers is right! We've got the musem - now let's build the

significant shorts

Open verdict on death of prisoner

An inquest jury returned an open verdict yesterday on a remand prisoner who died after being placed face down by prison officers in a "strip cell". Southwark Coroner's Court heard that Kenneth Sevenn, 25, had been remanded in Belmarsh

Museums where guests and Prison, Woolwich, for alleged attempted burglary, for three weeks before his death in November 1995. The unemployed father of

two, from Greenwich, southeast London, had a history of schizophrenia. The inquest was told the normal threeman control and restraint team could not control a thrashing Mr Severin, who had threatened to smash up his medical wing cell. Up to seven or eight Up to seven or eight built girl of Asian officers took him to the "strip appearance. She was last cell" and the inquest heard Mr Severin's death was most likely from positional

asphyxiation after prison officers placed him face down. The Coroner, Sir Montague Levine, said: "I think it is quite appalling medical officers did not know what his condition was."

Carer must be rehoused

An 11-year-old child "carer" whose family is at the centre of a "campaign of hatred" won a landmark High Court battle for the legal right to be considered for rehousing. In a ruling which could assist other beleaguered "children in need", a judge said a local council was under a legal duty to consider accommodating Simon

Bradford in a safer place. He ruled that the London Borough of Tower Hamlets had acted unlawfully in failing to assess Simon's individual needs under the provisions of the 1989 Children Act

In his judgment, Mr Justice Kay described how Simon, who has helped to care for his severely disabled mother since the age of four. was targeted for taunts and bullying because of the condition of his mother, who is crippled by arthritis and

'Means tests' for abortions

Women seeking abortions are said yesterday that he had being regularly subjected to means tests without their knowledge, according to a report published yesterday. Moral judgments rather than health need are also being used as the criteria for deciding whether a woman can have an NHS abortion, it is claimed.

The report from the Abortion Law Reform Association, based on a survey of health authorities. said arbitrary restrictions were being used to limit the number of abortions funded by the NHS. In some cases the ethical beliefs of health authority members and staff, hospital doctors and GPs decided whether or not a woman can have an abortion.

Lecturers vote on more action

University lecturers are voting on whether to step up industrial action over pay to include disruption of exam marking and student admissions. The Association of University Teachers, which represents 36,000 academic staff, yesterday agreed to hold the planned ballot while it and seven other higher education unions consider an improved pay offer from the university employers. The unions, which represent 100,000 staff, from professors to porters, held a one-day strike over pay last

Mother's plea for return of missing girl

A mother made an emotional appeal yesterday for the safe return of her nine-year-old daughter, missing for two days. As more than 200 police, civilians and army personnel continued their intensive searches of the garrison town of Warminster, Wiltshire, Mrs Paula Evans, 28, pleaded for her daughter,

Zoe, to come home.

Shaking uncontrollably and barely able to speak for weeping, she told a press conference: "Zoe come home. You will not be in any trouble. You are not grounded. Just come home."

father joined with the police appeal for public information to help trace the 4ft, slimseen on Saturday morning when a schoolboy neighbour saw her in a play-park near her home at Pepper Place, on the Warminister army housing complex.

Zoe's mother and step-

Manageress guilty of fraud at Harrods

A Harrods manageress was behind bars yesterday after being found guilty of helping to plunder more than £200,000 from the credit card accounts of wealthy customers. Elizabeth John's betrayal of trust, which "horrified" the store's management and prompted an in-depth security review, left one Arab customer with a £120,000 bill, but he was so rich he never noticed all the itemised extras on his Gold

Mastercard statements. Her brother, John, was unanimously convicted by the jury of one count of conspiracy to defraud between February 1993 and May 1995. She was remanded in custody for sentence on 7 February.

Taking politics literally.

A candidate who was accused of trying to deceive the electorate after he polled 10,000 votes as a "Literal" Democrat" plans to stand as "Gerald Maclone" against the health minister Gerald Malone in the general election. Richard Huggett received letters from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor's department under the name Maclone and had even taken

out a pension plan. Mr Huggett, who stood as a "Literal Democrat" in the 1994 Devon and Plymouth East European election. plans to stand as an independent in 50 constituencies. The same number has been targeted by the anti-abortion Pro-Life Alliance Party. Fran Abrams

Warning over pay increases

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An upturn in inflation to 2.7 per cent and forecasts of still higher figures is expected to drive up the level of pay increases this year. In a study published today, Incomes. Data Services observes that wage negotiators are coming under increasing

pressure. The research group points out that City predictions just before Christmas forecast the Retail Price Index at between 2.8 and 3.1 per cent in the first quarter and around 3.5 per cent in the second half of the year, or even 4 per cent under some circumstances. The first few settlements of 1997 have seen awards of 3 to 4 per cent, but recent weeks have seen disputes over parity requiring substantial increases to secure

settlements. Barrie Clement



November. Lucy Ward

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING Recycled paper made up 41.2% of

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OVERSEAS SURSCRIPTIONS

Brush with the past: Revivalists celebrating Plough Monday in Cambridgeshire yesterday. The ritual blessing of new crops dates back centuries and once involved plough boys who would dance at villages and collect money. Now this group of enthusiasts has recreated the tradition, with brooms replacing ploughs

Photograph: Brian Harris

Bomb latest in terror campaign

Jason Bennetto and David Garfinkel

A letter bomb that exploded at the London offices of an Arab newspaper vesterday is believed to be part of a world wide terror campaign, possibly by Islamic extremists.

In New York yesterday, two floors of the United nations building were evacuated when two more letter bombs addressed to Al-Havat, the newspaper targeted in the London attack, were discovered.

Two security guards were burt by the London postal booby trap. Three other devices, be-

were also sent to Al-Hayat. were destroyed in controlled explosions by anti-terrorist officers. At the beginning of the year, five letter bombs, disguised as Christmas cards, were sent to Al-Hayat's Washington office in the United States, al-

though none exploded. The US booby traps, which are being investigated by the FBI, were sent from Alexandria in Egypt. Staff at Al-Havat, a respected publication, said that the letters sent to the London offices also came from Alexandria. There is concern that

lieved to contain Semtex which devices still in the post. During yesterday morning's

explosion. Barry Roach, 46, from west London, suffered serious facial and abdominal injuries, and Andy McKenzie, 35, from south-west London, suffered from shock and burst ear drums, but was later released from hospital. The letter exploded in the basement postroom in the six-storey office block in Hammersmith.

Jihad Khazen, editor of Al Havat said the attack had come without warning. He said security had been stepped up in the wake of the attacks in the US. there may be further terrorist "Since that here we have in-

change. We will maintain our stalled a scanning machine," he said. He added that the letter had tripped off a warning signal in the machine.

"It made a noise going through the machine, he carried it in his hands and it blew up," he said, "We don't know if the guard opened it or what happened. There's no danger to his life, we hope his eyes are not affected."

He added: "We would like to know which party we provoked. We have been criticising extremism in the Arab world for the last eight years.

"I hope and pray there will be no more attacks. We will not

moderate position on Arab and international affairs. Susannah Tarbush, a reporter

on the newspaper, added: "We are always receiving threatening phone calls because of the nature of politics in the Arab world." Al-Havat, is a daily newspaper

printed in Arabic that is owned by the Prince Khalid Bin Sultan. a member of the Saudi Arabian royal family. It sells 165,000 copies daily, mainly in the Middle East and particularly in the
Gulf states. Most of the staff are

World Trade bombing. Alternatively the attack may be a Lebanese. The newspaper adopts a moderate line on most

fundamentalist groups. FBI officers are reported to by investigating links between the Washington devices and

issues - refusing to support terrorist acts - and has angered

a wide variety of groups with

some of its comment articles.

Among those known to be un-

happy with the paper are Islamic

the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre and a foiled plot to attack other New York landmarks. Four militant Muslims were jailed for life for the World Trade bombing. Alterstrike against the Saudi royal

lead to police climbdown

DIRECT LINE

Crime Correspondent

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tests during Christmas after a sentation of the Christmas anti dispute over drink-driving drink-driving campaign. statistics. The Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo)

This follows a survey in The Independent yesterday, which indicated motorists did, in fact, also revealed vesterday that it heed the anti-drink driving message during the festive period despite the police announcing an 18 per cent increase in the number of people driving while over the limit.

A survey of the 43 forces in England and Wales suggests that the increase is accounted for simply by the police testing more people this year. Since 1995, Acpo has re-

fused to reveal the number of people breathalysed, only disclosing the number positively tested and the number of accidents caused by drunk

Paul Manning. Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and spokesman for Acpo's Traffic Committee. wrote to The Independent saying: "The reaction to the statistics provided this year may well lead us to reappraise the information we provide and possibly lead us to stop publishing the number of positive tests altogether, perhaps only publishing the number of alcohol-related accidents and adding other categories.

Bogus breath-test figures | Loyalist ceasefire is over, RUC chief says tion came from a Paisley ally,

Ireland correspondent

The Government and the police found themselves in embarrassingly open dispute in Northern Ireland yesterday as the RUC flatly contradicted ministerial insistence that the loyal-

ist ceasefire was holding. The Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, continued to maintain that the ceasefire remained in place, despite two attempts to blow up boobytrap bombs in December.

His stance was already unmissions from security and loyalist sources that the Ulster remarks completely ignore the assertion of his own Chief Concomfortable in the face of adthe attacks. Yesterday, however, it was seriously undermined when the RUC's Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan, said publicly that he believed loyal-

ists were responsible. The issue dominated the first day of the resumed political talks at Stormont, where the various Northern Ireland parties, without Sinn Fein, gathered

It has great significance in that the political representatives of the loyalist paramilitary groups are at the talks on the Letters: Page 11 basis of a formal commitment

purely democratic means. If the loyalist ceasefire is seen the UK Unionist party leader, to be over, then they face ex-

The issue has led to some unusual political alignments. The Government is anxious to keep the loyalists at the table, and in this has the support of the na-tionalist SDLP and David Trimble's Ulster Unionists.

But republicans are making much of the charge that the establishment is applying double standards to the loyalists and the republicans with under-car IRA, and that Sir Patrick's present Nelsonian blind eye was never turned towards Sinn stable that the loyalist ceasefire is over, and show his determination to operate a policy of unilateral exclusion against Sinn

Fein. The Rev Ian Paisley, unusually, was to be found on the same side of the argument. He said all parties at the talks had made a binding obligation not to deviate from principles of non-violence but that ministers

were doing nothing about it. prepared to face up to this issue," he added. The most pointed interven-

"It seems to me they are not

fairies that are breaking legs and crucifying people throughout Northern Ireland?" The talks themselves remain hogged down on the arms decommissioning issue, with no agreement in existence on how the issue should be dealt with.

Robert McCartney. He asked.

with withering sarcasm: "Do you

think it was the tooth fairy

that's planted the bombs? Do

you think it is a band of tooth

The Chief Constable, in a BBC interview, said he saw no prospect of a new ceasefire at the moment, adding that he was convinced that the IRA was determined to kill members of the security forces. He warned that each IRA attack increased the prospect of a full resumption of loyalist violence.

While Mr Flanagan said the loyalists had planted the boobytraps, while Sir Patrick said he believed the loyalist ceasefire was still in place. He added: "I am very glad that the Combined Loyalist Military Command, so-called, has not moved back from the ceasefire which it announced 27 months ago. That distinguishes it from the IRA command which ended its ceasefire quite unjustifiably in February of last year,"

the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

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BACK ISSUES

Have we

done our

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life of a

teenager?

The world of the 13-year-old is more

complex now than when Tony Blair sat

down to his prep, writes Judith Judd

homework

1997 - THE INDEPEND

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The ubiquitous Spice Girls will Brit Awards, it was announced last night.

The teenyboppers' favourites were nominated for best British group and best British newcomer. Their No.1 single. "Wannabe", nominated for best British single, and "Wannabe" and "Say You'll Be There" both contenders for best video by British female artists.

Dance group The Prodigy, fioth tipped to do well, have been nominated for best video, best British dance act and best British single with "Firestarter". Dubbed as the music industry's Oscars, the Brit Awards hit

Spice Girls are Brits hot tip the headlines last year when probably clean up at this year's Pulp's Jarvis Cocker staged a protest against Michael Jackson after he was nauseated by the latter singer's apparent imita-

tion of Jesus Christ. This year the comedian, Ben Elton, will present the awards. to be held at London's Earl's Court Exhibition Centre on February 24. Britpop groups Oasis and Blur were not considered as they did not produce an album in time for the award

nominations. The most coveted of the 14 categories, apart from best British newcomer, are the best British male and best British female solo artists. Heading the Michael, followed by Mark Morrison, Simply Red, Sting, and Tricky.

Best female artist nominations are Dina Caroll, Gabrielle, Donna Lewis, Louise, and Eddie Reader.

The other nominations include: Best British group: Kula Shaker, Lightning Seeds, Man-

Best video by a British artist: Chemical Brothers, "Setting Sun"; Dodgy, "Good Enough"; Jamiroquai, "Virtual Insanity". Manic Street Preachers, "A De-

list for best male artist is George sign for Life"; Orbital, "The Box"; Prodigy, "Firestarter"; Prodigy, "Breathe"; George Michael, "Fastlove"; Spice Girls, "Say You'll be There": Spice Girls, "Wannabe".

Best Album by a British Artiste: Kula Shaker, K; Lighthouse Family, Ocean Drive; Manic Street Preachers, Every thing Must Go; George Michael, Older, Ocean Colour Scene, Moseley Shoals.

ic Street Preachers, Ocean Best British Newcomer: Al-Colour Scene and The Spice isha's Attic; Ash; Babybird; Bluetones; Kula Shaker, Lighthouse Family, Longpigs, Mansun; Mark Morrison; Skunk Anansie; Space; The Spice



Tony Blair's decision to prescribe homework times adds another complication to the confusing world of the 13-year-old.

On the one hand, teenagers are under pressure to earn money to eke out family finances or to buy the latest pair of designer trainers.

On the other, they feel the need to work hard at school because jobs for 16-year-old school leavers are harder to come by than those for 18-yearolds, and most expect to stay on at school.

And, the fin de siècle distractions of drugs, earlier sexual ac-tivity and television and video make the lives of teenagers forty years ago seem comparatively simple.

Yesterday, as a survey showed that one in four under-13s is working illegally, the furore continued over the Labour leader's intention to put recommended homework times in compulsory home-school contracts.

If teenagers are into designer jeans, the nation's leaders are Whichever party wins the next election, home preparation will study centres for inner-city be on the agenda.

Today the Government will release its own guidelines on homework. No times will be included but schools will be encouraged to copy the good practice of others.

Not to be outdone, the Prince of Wales yesterday congratu-

The journalists at Children's Express,

the press agency gave a full range of

responses to Tony Blair's Initiative on

homework - and hope he will do more

of his own if the Labour Party wins the

Nine year-old Anton Yavorsky, a year five pupil at St Mary of the Angels pri-

mary school in Notting Hill, west Lon-

don, says it is hard to judge who would

a night: "Some people take longer to

do the same work. I got homework, but not every night — it usually takes

next general election.

pupils. The Prince's Trust aims to develop 1,000 such centres by

The ideas of both the Prince and the Government are more acceptable to teachers than those of Mr Blair. His efforts to impose homework times on schools face other problems

I go to secondary school."

Increasing homework at primary

school was seen as a good idea by the

secondary school pupils who were in-

terviewed. Tara Glynn, 17, from Hack-

ney, east London, said: "I never did

homework in primary school until the

last year. When I started secondary

school it was part of growing up and

Tara, who is in her final year of A-

Levels at Our Lady's Convent School,

in Stamford Hill, east London, says

Labour sources explained yesterday that the set times of 30 minutes' homework for primary pupils and an hour and a half for secondary would not themselves be legally enforceable. Schools would be free to decide what they put in their lated Scotland on leading the besides the teenagers who are contracts but the Office for

The aim is to raise the profile of homework. A recent survey by the National Foundation for Educational Research found that 43 per cent of primary pupils received no regular work to take home.

صكنات الاعل

What they're saying on the classroom floor

what happened that day at school. I

don't think I agree with the idea of par-

ent-teacher contracts because the

Senab Adekunie, 14, is in year 9

at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Sec-

ondary School, in Tony Blair's Isling-

ton constituency. She does the

homework her teacher assigns and ex-

tra work where possible. "Not every-

home. Homework centres would show

that there is support for you and that

adults think your studies matter.

one has a stable environment at

children will only get resentful."

secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, which strongly supports homeschool contracts, said: "Labour

need more prescription like a hole in the head. "It isn't sensible to try to

to bed until 10pm." Juanita, a pupil

at Greycoats Hospital Lower School in

Sloane Square, west London, added:

"It's not fair to say that you should do

a certain amount because they don't

know how all the pupils can cope."
Gillian Antwi-Bosiako, 10, a pupil

at St Francis primary School, in Peck-

ham, south London, gave a novel re-

sponse. "I do my homework because

I'm usually bored at home," she said.

"I get one piece of homework at night.

which takes me about 15 minutes. It's

needs to understand that we

prescribe even by means of

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said: "Legislation will do nothing to solve the biggest problems which are television, videos and parents who aren't interested in

at secondary school because it is too

Gillian says Blair's promise of 30

pupils per primary school class does

not go far enough. She currently has 25 classmates. "There should only be

15 in a class. With 26 it's really crowd-

ed and there are more people who ruin

your learning when they are mucking :

■ Children's Express is a programme

of learning through journalism for chil-dren aged eight to 18. A charity, it pro-

vides a news service that promotes the

views and investigations of the young.

easy now."

American studies have shown that children who do regularly marked homework do better

than those who do not. Yet Italian children who do more homework than British children do worse in international tests while Finns, who do less, score better.

Inspectors emphasise that it is the quality of homework that counts. If the political initiatives mean ever-growing quantities of boring homework, they will fail to woo teenagers from their paper rounds.

John Coleman, director of the Trust for the Study of Adolescence, said: "I'm not someone who looks back to a golden age but we do have hard evidence that there are more pressures on today's teenagers. They become sexually active earlier. there is more youth unemployment, more are living with sin-gle parents and the gap between those with plenty of money and those with little has widened.

> Leader, page 11 Letters, page 11

about 15 to 20 minutes. Mostly it's homework varies from day to day even spelling and maths," he said. "Maybe at her level." Homework depends on Twelve-year-old Juanita Rosenoir not enough and is too easy most of said: "In my school they sometimes, the time. I think I will find it harder Twelve-year-old Juanita Rosenoir into homework by design. Illegal labour takes toll on children's education

benefit from 30 minutes of homework gaining responsibility.

Barrie Clement Labour Editor

Children's education is being seriously impaired by work undertaken illegally outside school hours, according to a poll published today.

Nearly a quarter of children under the legal age limit of 13 have jobs and more than a quarter say they are sometimes or often too tired to do their school work as a consequence. The survey, conducted by Mori for the TUC, found that

one in five 11-year-olds and more than one in four 12-yearolds had performed paid work. The most popular job during term and in the summer holi-

days for all- 11 to 16-year-olds was babysitting - undertaken by around 40 per cent of schoolchildren who work. Paper rounds were taken on by more than a quarter of working children. Girls were significantly more likely to perform babysitting and boys paper rounds, partly accounting for higher minry rates among boys.

Cleaning and shop work also featured prominently in the list of tasks frequently undertaken. Some 2 per cent did work in factories during term time and 3 per cent during the summer hol-idays - which is illegal.

One in six youngsters between the ages of 11 and 16 work seven days a week and one

in five had been involved in an accident or been injured at work, Mori found in the poll of

4,295 pupils in 175 schools. Nearly 40 per cent of 11- to 16-year-olds had worked before 7am or after 7pm, which is also illegal. Almost a quarter of 11and 12-year-olds had breached the hours limit. The TUC believes it is the

first time the true extent of il-

Reporters from Children's

provides a news service for

youngsters, spent a day applying for jobs. Here is what happened to them.

fered £1 per hour to stack

shelves and help shoppers at

a convenience store in Peck-

ham, south-east London. "The

boss fold me that people with experience get more," she said. Lafer, Majida was offered

£30 to work a 40-hour week

at a hairdresser's, also in Peck-

ham, with the promise of a fur-

ther £10 if she agreed to work

on Saturdays. "She didn't ask

me if I had any qualifications.

I would have had to shampoo

Fifteen-year-old Marisa Aziz:

(not her real name) took on a

summer job at a dentist's

surgery in Shepherd's Bush,

customers and clean up.

Majida Khatun, 14, was of-

the Government for allegedly delaying European law which would reinforce and simplify existing British legislation. The European directive on the protection of young people at work

While some bad employers knowingly exploit children as

legal working among children cheap labour, says the TUC, most are ignorant of the legal

making tea, Marisa was sur-

prised to be asked to help with

mouth suction, sterilisation of

equipment and other tasks

normally reserved for a trained

and I was paid only £10." she

said. "I told them I was 15 and

When my parents found out

they made me quit."

Dan Redre, 15, (name also

changed) said he worked for 60 hours in one week at a restau-

rant in north London in July. He

received £70. "I was a waiter

I didn't enjoy it at all," he said.

"I started early in the morning

and finished late at night.

didn't know how much my

wages were because I was a

beginner, but at the end of the

week, lieft."

they said it didn't matter ...

"I worked from 9.30 to 6,

dental nurse.

was due to be implemented in this country by last June.

This working life

Express, a charity which as general reception work and

constraints and so are parents.

British law is a "confusing mix" of hundreds of by-laws, the application of which is undermined by inadequate resources, and national legislation.

John Monks, general secre-tary of the TUC, said that while earning extra pocket money enabled children to learn independence, their education and health should not be allowed to suffer. He said: "Many employers are probably just as confused as most parents about what the law says on employing school kids. What we need urgently are clear, standardised laws and proper resources for local authorities to enforce

them effectively. The survey found regional variations. More Welsh children worked as cleaners (23 per cent) than any other region and in East Anglia more than a quarter were employed in catering and one in 10 on farms.

The TUC commented that school-age workers received "lousy pay". Nearly four in 10 carned less than £10 a week during term time and just one in 10 carned £30 a week. Holiday jobs were better paid, probably because of the longer hours. During the summer two-thirds earned up to £30 a week and one in five between £30 and

An Open Letter to the Lord Chancellor

Dear Lord Mackay,

On 14th November we notified the Prime Minister of the denial of human rights that results from politicians limiting access to justice. We called for the establishment of an autonomous Head of Judiciary as an act of good faith.

We now know that you have stated that "should there be a conflict between common law and the will of Parliament, the will of Parliament would prevail...whether the law was good or bad." In plainer language, you openly put your

duty to deliver justice second to the interests of the political party that elevated you and in whose policies you as a Cabinet Minister have a personal stake. But when the government of the day

abandons moral authority by misrepresenting the will of the people in order to do as it pleases, its legislation isn't entitled to special treatment.

We are also unhappy with the example you set. Should judges believe that there is nothing wrong with subordinating justice to privilege? Those are the ethics we expect of a banana republic.

In our view there is a constitutional crisis. Only a judiciary uncorrupted by politics is worthy of respect. Your position seems untenable.

An Open Letter to the Shadow Lord Chancellor

Dear Lord Irvine,

Labour will incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. We call for a faster, broader, more direct way to achieve similar results.

A simple Transfer of Functions Order can create a structurally independent Head of Judiciary who would also take over the Home Secretary's quasi-judicial powers in regard to sentencing, immigration and appeals.

There should be an honest admission that Ministers are not in infallible. Accountability is crucial. People are more than electoral fodder and should be treated accordingly.

Concerned individuals and groups should be able to challenge wrongful legislation. A government which accepted that legal principles could be used to check its power would deserve our approval.

(After 18 years of one party rule, the judiciary, the most powerful of quangos, needs renovation. All judges should be asked to apply to a non-partisan panel for reappointment.)

The legal system is deeply flawed. But a new administration could begin to regain public confidence with these low cost but meaningful reforms.

Suzon Forscey-Moore, Organiser of the Campaign for a Fair Hearing Member Organisations: Action for Justice, New Democracy Action, The M25 Three Campaign The Cheltenham Group, The Litigants in Person Society, Royal and Sun Alliance Action Group Holtsfield Community Campaign, The Christian Commission on Scandals in Justice Victims of Tranquillisers, The Miscarriages of Justice Register, The Albion Party

The Campaign for a Fair Hearing is a non-profit human rightsbased umbrella organisation. Our aims are to hasten the day when anyone can expect a fair hearing in an impartial court of law or the court of public opinion; to encourage constitutional reform; to widen public debate. We meet outside the Royal Courts of Justice and other UK courts every Wednesday between 12.30 and 2 pm. This is a time and place to apply pressure upon the government. Join us-the campaign is entirely staffed by sensible and dignified volunteers. Our member groups must commit their resources to their own priorities, therefore we must depend upon your support. If you can help us with the cost of advertising, together we can do a great deal to bring forward a general election-unite with us behind the power of this just cause.

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Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

Labour councils are privately being urged by Lahour leaders to set modest council tax rises in April by avoiding breaking their spending limits.

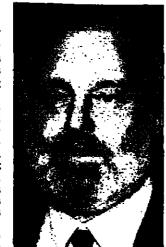
Many councils are angry with the allocations they were offered by the Government, and there were threats to carry on spending by raising council tax bills. It was estimated that council tax bills could rise by eight per cent.

If the general election takes place on 10 April, the bills could be landing on doormats a few days before polling day. The Government is ready to blame Labour councils for the increases in council tax.

Labour leaders are insisting the Government is to blame by rigging the grant support system to favour Tory authorities. But the message has gone out to Labour authorities to avoid falling into the Tory trap.

The councils have been given a clear warning that Labour will keep in place the spending clamp on councils to be forced through the Commons this

Frank Dobson, Labour spokesman for the environment, has warned Labour councils that an incoming Labour Government would not change



Dobson: Labour would not bail out overspent councils

the limits, which will be introduced from the new financial

Councils are being told that they will not be bailed out for overspending if Labour comes underline Tony Blair's determination not to make promises before the election about higher spending which cannot

"There is no way that any Government can tear up local government settlements or start changing the settlements the rate-payers.

through the financial year, beto budget to be able to meet their expenditure," Mr Dobson told The Independent.

However, Mr Dobson will be leading the Labour attack on the system for being rigged in favour of Tory councils, such as Westminster, against Labourcontrolled councils, such as Manchester, which, in spite of the IRA bomb last summer, will suffer from the spending allo-cation provisionally announced

in November.
David Curry, the local government minister, and Sir Paul Beresford, the under-secretary of state, have met 80 separate about the sums they have been offered in the provisional settlement.

The order has to be passed by Parliament by the end of the month, and the figures confirmed next month for the councils to send out their council tax bills in April.

Councils which fail to abide the limits will face capping in March to prevent them exceeding their spending alloca-tions. Labour leaders believe that most councils will stick by the limits, and some will spend less than they were allocated to avoid a burden being placed on



Tories spot 'black hole' in Labour's costing

yesterday claimed a "new black hole" has opened in Labour's spending plans, following the row over legal problems with their proposed windfall tax on

Tories have been saying about mitments but said that they New Labour. "Their policies are had explained how their spendflawed, the danger is in the detail and the taxpayer will foot They said that some of their the bill.

he utilities. "Last November we pub-He said legal opinion on the lished our costing of New Labour's public spending plans.

The Conservative Party chair- lished yesterday by Aims of The total came to £30bn. New man, Dr Brian Mawhinney, Industry, confirmed what the Labour did not deny these coming plans would be funded. commitments would be covered by the windfall tax.

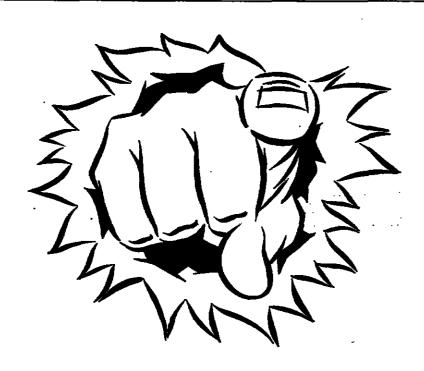
"Now this opinion opens a

their proposed windfall tax bogged down in expensive and lengthy litigation, how do they propose to cover the costs of their much trumpeted employment programme?

"Their welfare to work youth employment pledge would cost new black hole in New Labour's £500m a year. Where would the

now a new annual £1.8bn black hole in the few spending commitments Mr Blair has admitted would cost anything."
The Deputy Prime Minister,

Michael Heseltine, also challenged Labour to name the firms that would be hit by the



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Transsexuals win extra change from the lottery

by the National Lottery Charities Board.

The Gender Trust, of Horsham and Henfield, West Sus-sex, is awarded £33,700 in grants to health, disability and care projects totalling £9.6m.

The money for the charity, aimed at helping relieve emo-tional stress suffered by transsexuals and those uneasy about their sexuality, will go towards relocation and expansion.

The award was criticised by Tory MPs and, implicitly, by Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage.

The largest grant is £500,000 to the Samaritans to develop and fund their helpline. The Child Migrants Trust.

money grants announced today by the National Lottery Char-sent to live in Australian Children's Homes after the Second World War.

> The National Association For Premenstrual Syndrome, in Sevenoaks, Kent, is awarded £161.112, which will be used to raise awareness of the condition. Other groups receiving awards included the Leonard

Cheshire Foundation for the disabled (£492,203), the Burma Star Association for war veterans (£83,454), the Royal National Institute for the Blind (331,714), Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund (£150,000) tions of lottery cash to organi-

Volunteers (£180,000).

A charity for transsexuals is based in Nottingham, receives for transsexuals is not the right among 65 recipients of lottery £197,000 to expand its work of use of what amounts to public

Mrs Bottomley said: "I am delighted that the National Lottery Charities Board have decided to support medical charities and others including the Samaritans, the RNIB and the Burma Star Association

which will be widely welcomed.
"However, it is for the Charities Board to explain and account for their actions in the areas which may not attract widespread public endorse-

In the past John Major has expressed opposition to donaand Community Service for sations for groups such as lesbians. Last month the NLBC Harry Greenway, Tory MP awarded £75,000 to an advice for Ealing North, said: "Support group for male prostitutes."

MPs notch up the air miles, from Portugal to Venezuela

Political Correspondent

MPs who suffer from airsickness need not apply. The 11 waded through almost 100 members of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee clocked up 43 overseas trips between them last year, according to a report published yesterday.

The committee's members went to 11 different countries on six different group visits, most of them within Europe. However, all but two went to South America to view Britain's links with Venezuela, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

During the year groups of report produced as a result will ernor of Ho MPs also took trips to Denmark be published this week. The satellite link.

and Sweden, Germany, Spain, Portugal and France. The word 'junket" should not spring to mind, though. The committee meetings during the visits, plus more than 30 contacts with foreign dignitaries in this country.

David Howell, chairman of the committee, said the number of visits had been slightly more than usual last year, with the average standing at about three. However, the MPs had split into two groups for the South American visits, with three going to Venezuela and Mexico and a

temind Parliament, the press, Whitehall and the government that life doesn't begin and end in Europe. They keep you at it very closely indeed. They are working visits and there isn't much relaxation.

trips were necessary, he said, "to

"Whenever it is called 'junketing, which it inevitably is, I think those who talk of it should come and spend a couple of days in Sarajevo, Kenya or Rwanda."

Two years ago the committee became the first group of MPs willingly to avoid the chance of further six going separately to Argentina, Brazil and Chile. A terviewed Chris Patten, Govreport produced as a result will ernor of Hong Kong, via a

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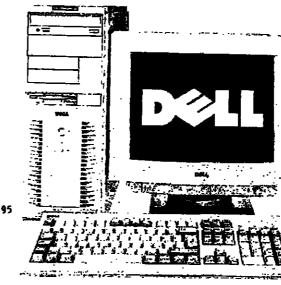
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on Sature

The first dra date on you

tieset will b wither the tth or 11th January 199

It you possess o number selection take place before cost of including a prize is claimer Saturday drams Marianne Macdonald Arts Correspondent

Les Murray, Australia's most distinguished poet, won the TS Eliot Prize for poetry last night while he slept soundly on the far side of the world.

His unconscious achievement was the

greater given the competition on the short list of 10 from some of the world's greatest poets – above all. Seamus Heaney, winner of the 1995 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Bluetones. They worked a four-line poem of his into their song "Bluetonic" – which to Mr Mitchell's delight made it to number one.

It was not all bad, however. "What's good about being a poet now is that there

Murray's exceptional, versatile poetry derives from the isolated life he lives on a small farm in Bunyah, New South Wales, where he also grew up.

Wales, where he also grew up.
The £5,000 award for his collection,
Subhuman Redneck Poems, was announced at 5.15am New South Wales
time. Recuperating from a heart attack,
the 58-year-old had been unable to fly to
England for the announcement and presentation by Eliot's widow, Valerie.

re is the money coming from Mr.

ur's costin

s win ext

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1 to Venezue

But before last night's ceremony in London, Adrian Mitchell, one of the short-listed poets, denounced the Arts Council – which had promised to host a luncheon for the winner – saying it "did not give a shit" for poetry.

The well-established poet, who had been tipped to win, told *The Independent*: "I wrote them a long proposition suggesting they pay wages for poets, and they said they got it, but they never replied.

"The Arts Council is meant to support the arts, and poetry is one the greatest arts in Britain. The Arts Council has no concerns about supporting opera, but it has always had a policy of letting poets starve in garrets, or whatever they do."

Mitchell, 64, is one of Europe's bestselling poets, but he said he still did not make enough money to support himself and his wife, an actress, such was the nature of being a poet in the 1990s.

"I could possibly make a living these days from poetry readings if there was just me to support and I had no mortgage, because after many years doing readings for £5 or nothing I am getting paid properly — £100 to £500 a time," he explained.

explained.

"But very few actually live full-time on poetry. Great writers like Hugh MacDiarmid and Basil Bunting lived and died in poverty, which is a shameful thing. What it says about the Arts Council is that

it does not give a shit for the survival of noetry."

Mitchell subsidises his work by writing plays and adapting foreign dramas, and fits in his art as best he can. The most he has been paid for his poetry is £2,000, which came from the pop group The Bluetones. They worked a four-line poem of his into their song "Bluetonic"—which to Mr Mitchell's delight made it

It was not all bad, however. "What's good about being a poet now is that there are a lot more readings than there were in the Fifties. And with technology and computers and desktop publishing there's nothing to stop people publishing their own poems."

The Swansea-born poet Stephen Knight, 36, was also short-listed for his collection *Dream City Cinema*. Less-established than Mitchell, he is blunt, but not bitter, about the sacrifices.

He said: "I have an incredibly generous partner who subsidises me but it means I have no car, no mortgage and no children." He lives in a one-bedroom flat in Twickenham with his girlfriend, who is a teacher.

To make ends meet Knight works two days a week – along with out-of-work actors – selling theatre tickets by phone, and picks up money by script-reading, directing and doing school workshops. What he finds frustrating is that, despite the vaunted poetry boom, so few people read new poetry. "My friends are all graduates and they all read novels and go to the theatre but they wouldn't think of picking up a new book of poems," he said. Susan Wicks, 49, whose first novel, The Key, is published next week, was also on the short list of the TS Eliot Prize, which is supported by Waterstone's book-

sellers, for The Clever Daughter.

The mother of 15-year-old and 18-year-old girls, she said she has been lucky - her husband has helped to support her and she teaches creative writing part-time at the University of Kent

and she teaches creative writing part-time at the University of Kent. "Writing poetry is not a financial question for me," she observed. "I'm only now starting to make money from it; I'm

just about beginning to think of myself as a professional writer." The other five short-listed poets were: Alice Oswald; Christopher Reid, Ciaran



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armid and Basil Bunting lived and died in poverty, which is a shameful thing.

What it says about the Arts Council is that Carson, Maura Dooley and John Fuller.

Well-versed: The Australian Les Murray, winner of the TS Eliot prize

Photograph: Edward W

Macho Aussie who mixes wit and rebellion

Boyd Tonkin Literary Editor

Many readers will remember the Monty Python crew of the 1970s raising laughs from the idea of a gang of raucous Aussic sheep-shearers who sang a learned little ditty about Kant, Spinoza and Wittgenstein. Well, you might describe Les Murray as the Philosophers' Song come to witty, erudite, in-your-face

Murray, who last night won the £5,000 TS Eliot prize for the year's best volume of poetry, isn't afraid of picking up the brawny, macho "ocker" stereotype and converting it into a badge of honour. The prolific crowd-pleasing Australian poet born in 1938 on a sheep farm on the northern coast of New South Wales, entitled his most recent book Subhuman Reducck Poems. As a way of turning an insult around, that surely ranks alongside the radical rap group who called themselves Niggaz with Attitude.

Murray has Attitude in a distinctly Australian shade touchy, argumentative, egalitarian but his cascading verse buries the cultural cringe in a flood of generous and moving ideas and images. He is a Catholic who dedicates all his books "to the glory of God". He also combines great learning with democratic instincts.

As his British publisher, Michael Schmidt, explains, his is "a very anarchic Catholicism that translates into a hostility to all forms of coercion", whether by the state, by arts funding bodies or by liberal orthodoxy.

He is also, famously, a very big man in the physical as well as intellectual sense. The bard of the excluded, the forgotten, the humiliated, he can speak to everyone who recalls being a fat kid who was never picked for playground teams or a blushing adolescent who could never get a date. As his poem "Rock Music" asks: "The beautiful Nazis, why are they so crue!?/ Why, to castrate the aberrant, the original, the wounded who might change our species".

might change our species".

His lifelong empathy with the original and the wounded extends to the balance of power at home. Schmidt stresses that Murray "is very into Aboriginal

INSIDE AYERS ROCK

By Les Murray

Inside Avers Rock is lu with paired fluorescent lights on steel pillars supporting the

eciling
of haze-blue marquee cloth
high above the non-slip pavers
Curving around the cafeteria
throughout vast inner space
is a Milky Way of plastic chairs
in four-somes around tables
all the way to the truck drivers

Dusted coolabah trees grow to the ceiling. TV talk in gassy colours, and round the walls are Outback sloop fronts: the Bechive Bookshop for

the Beeting Bookshop for brochures. Casual Clobber, the bottled Country Küchen and the sheet-iron Dreamtime Exocrience

that is turned off at night. A high bank of medal-ribbony holly jars presides over island counters like opened crues.

crues.
one labelled White Mugs, and
covered with them.
A two-dimensional policeman
discourages shoplifting of gifts
and near the entrance, where-

you pay for fuel, there stands a tribal man in rib-paint and public tassel. It is all gentle and kind. In beyond the children's play-

there are fossils, like enimpled old drawings of creatures in rock.

art and insists on the centrality of Aboriginal culture to the

Australian experience".

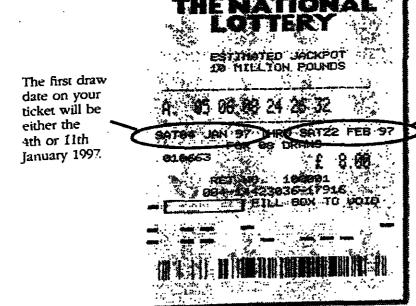
"Inside Avers Rock" presents the ancient sacred site of the continent's first inhabitants as a cave of tawdry gimmicks, colonised by the banal suburban nation Australia has become.

Reading Murray, you sense above all a cornucopian talent, a writer who turn his hand and brain to any form and theme with an almost casual fertility.

England has not produced a bard-for-all-seasons of this kind since the days of Tennyson. Schmidt comments that Murray is "not really an ironist, although he's a great wit and savage satirist. That's what really sets him apart from modern British writing".

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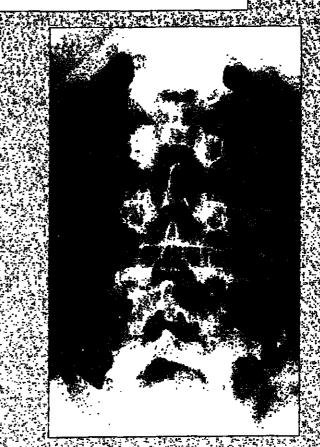
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THE !

NHS on trial: MPs rebel as heart patient's surgery put off four times

Cancelled

operations

blamed

for death

Fran Abrams and Liz Hunt

of the political stage.

statement on the rise in emer-

lished figures vesterday showing

across all specialities had closed

The British Medical Associ-

ation last week reiterated its

warnings of a winter crisis, and

is seeking an urgent meeting with Stephen Dorrell, the Sec-

retary of State for Health, after

a survey revealed widespread

ward and hospital closures and

A consultant who cared for

Mrs Harrild at Guy's hospital,

n south London, said heart

surgery at the trust had been se-

verely affected "for several

months" because intensive care

beds were permanently full. Dr

Bob Knight said: "This was a

disaster for Mrs Harrild and a terrible tragedy for her family,

made worse by the feeling that

if things had been dealt with in

some other way she would still

Harrild's son David said that the

family would campaign for bet-ter funding for the NHS. Her

death was caused by the stress

of being prepared four times for

the operation and then let down,

he said. "In our view her death

since the introduction of the in-

ternal NHS market.



Australian hero's welcome leaves yachtsman all at sea

Robert Milliken Fremantie

Tony Bullimore threw back his head and laughed when I asked him yesterday if it was true that Kevin Costner was going to make the film about his extraordinary shipwreck survival in the Southern Ocean. Without replying, he reached out and touched the brim of my hat and pushed it down to my nose. It was a gesture that said, "Don't be so cheeky." Then he was hustled into an ambulance and whisked away from the quay at Fremantle near Perth to be re-

6 What would you sooner do, have a beer in the pub or go for counselling?

united with his wife, Lalel, after a hero's welcome on a brilliant sunny morning.

Mr Bullimore was overhelmed by the sight that greeted him when he sailed in yesterday, accompanied by the French vachtsman Thierry Dubois aboard the Australian frigate HMAS Adelaide, the ship which rescued them both last Thursday after their yachts capsized in the southern ocean 1,600 miles south-west of

wishers, a navy band playing "It's a Wonderful World", flags, speeches, government officials, and at least 100 journalists and camera crews, made it a great hero's return, and a scene for which Hollywood reportedly is already preparing the script

Determined not to be hobbled by the trench foot which he picked up during four days trapped in the hull of his upturned yacht. Mr Bullimore walked with a limp and a broad grin down the gangplank. It was the former Royal Marine's first landing since starting the Vendée Globe race off the French Atlantic coast in November. Wearing grey navy overalls and a blue cap, he said: "I have been given another chance. It's been absolutely as-tonishing. I am slightly emo-tional over this. All I can say is thank you to everyone on the Adelaide... Then he turned, looked up to the ship's crew and threw open his arms. They

At Fremantle Hospital, Mr Dubois required no treatment but Mr Bullimore will have daily treatment in the hospital's hyperbaric chamber, similar to the decompression treatment given to divers with the bends. Yesterday, Mr Bullimore also had an operation on a finger he trapped in a hatch in his yacht.

When they stepped ashore, the survivors made a pointed contrast: the tall, handsome, phlegmatic 29 year-old Frenchman and the stocky, feisty, wisecracking Englishman who, at 58, is at an age when most of his Thousands of cheering well-contemporaries are thinking of to replace his wrecked £750,000



But they had one thing in com-

mon: the will to never say die. As Mr Bullimore put it yesterday: "I couldn't get any further down in my spirits, and I started to allocate the last few hours ... At the same time, a little bit of the old professionalism hit

me: keep going, don't give up. All of a sudden, I heard the sound of an aircraft circling overhead." The cheque books were out

yesterday with promotional offers.that could make Mr Bullimore more than enough money

which he survived, are just two of the products bidding for his endorsements.

The public side of Mr Bullimore's reunion with his wife trauma counselling: "What at the British consul's residence in Perth was bought by an Australian television network, reportedly for £75,000.

As they were shown hugging last night, Mrs Bullimore said: "I never gave up hope because I knew the old buildog would come home." Mr Bullimore said: "You are either a survivor or you aren't a survivor." He said he would continue solo

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tiveness, putting yourself up against other people. That's important to me." He scoffed at suggestions that he undertake would you sooner do, go and go and be counselled? It doesn't

take much to work it out." The couple will return to Britain as soon as doctors have given Mr Bullimore the allclear, Meanwhile, Mr Bullimore is using his experience to make suggestions for improving safety for round-the-world yacht

(DIRECT LINE)

search has been called off for Gerry Roufs, 43, a Canadian whose last known position was south of Easter Island and west of the tip of South America. The rescuers of Mr Bul-

day gave their first detailed accounts of last week's events They emphasised the crucial role of sophisticated communications technology, such as the distress beacons from both men's yachts which sent satellite signals to the race organisers in Paris last Sunday, enabling the Australian authorities to pinpoint the yachts.

But the rescuers also praised the men's physical and mental strength, without which they would not have survived. Hank Scott, 25, the navy lieutenant who climbed down a wire from a helicopter to winch Mr Dubois to safety, said: "Mr Dubois and Mr Bullimore were perfect survivors. They didn't panic and they were mentally composed. Mr Bullimore was even better because he was making jokes and told his rescuers he loved them." Ian McLachlan, the Aus-

tralian defence minister, told the survivors: "You were lucky, gentlemen, that this country has the people and the equipment to mount such a rescue mission successfully ...

"But you ... seem to have made separately all the right decisions. Your survival reminds us of the ability of certain men and women to transcend difficulties which would overwhelm the rest of us. These are the examples which lead us on."

The death of an elderly woman whose life-saving heart surgery was cancelled four times betient to have to go through this torture. We are sure she should be alive now if she hadn't constantly been put back."
Mrs Harrid's husband, Bill,
68, a retired HGV driver, said
the family were speaking publicly
to prevent future tragedies and
did not blame the bearing. "We cause of specialist bed shortages has moved the winter crisis in the health service to the centre

did not blame the hospital. "We

the fact that these operations had been cancelled," he added.

We feel it is cruelty to the pa-

As the family of Queenie
Harrild, 69, blamed her death
on inadequate NHS funding,
opposition politicians called
for an immediate Commons don't want Queenie to have died in vain," he said. "Hopefully, this won't happen again." Mrs Harrild, a former nursery school helper, who had al-ready had one heart bypass, was gency admissions to hospitals, exacerbated by cold weather and flu, which are adding to the admitted to her local hospital in Lewisham on 3 December and Chris Smith, Labour's spokesman on health, also pubtransferred to Guy's 10 days later. Operations were scheduled for 23 December, 24 December, 2 January and 3 January, but that almost one in four beds

never went ahead. Mrs Harrild was then told her operation would be on Monday 6 January. However,

she died on 4 January. Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on health who organised the press conference for the family, said the number of beds available at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust had fallen from 1,400 to 1,100 m two years. The number of operations purchased by Mrs Harrild's local health authority from the trust was to be cut by a further 5 per cent from

Dr Knight said Mrs Har-rild's case had been exacerbated by a high number of admissions over Christmas. However, a new building with 13 new intensive care beds in it was lying empty, he added.

A trust spokeswoman said the building was not ready. The hos-At a press conference at pital had five more intensive Westminster yesterday, Mrs care beds than it did four years ago, and a new cardiac centre had recently opened at St

But she added: "We are now treating people who would have died a few years ago and they is the result of the constant are much sicker and require build-ups and let-downs due to intensive care for longer.

Dorrell fails to halt rebellion

Political Correspondent

Attempts by Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, to pacify two Tory rebels angry about the closure of hospital casualty units ap-

peared to have failed last night. Sir John Gorst, MP for Hendon North, said after a meeting with Mr Dorrell that the Government could still not rely on his support. Sir John first made the threat last month and has abstained on three key votes since doing so.

He was accompanied to the Department of Health by Hugh Dykes, MP for Harrow East, who had been rumoured to be considering a similar protest.

Sir John said that although the hour-long meeting had ended with the minister agreeing to consider some of his suggestions for resolving the dispute, he could not disclose details of what had been said.

He said he was not expecting to meet Mr Dorrell again in the expected to hear from him on

the matter soon. "The situation remains as it has been all along. My policy is not to tell anyone what I am going to do.

"It doesn't mean that I won't, on some issues, vote against the Government or, if it is in the interests of my constituents, vote with them. They just can't rely on my vote," he said.

Sir John abstained last month on votes about fisheries and harassment, and did so again yesterday on the Government's sentencing Bill.

The complete withdrawal of his support would put the Government in a minority in the House of Commons.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said that the MPs had talked to Mr Dorrell about matters relating to health in their constituencies.

"Mr Dorrell emphasised that he remains available for further meetings, as he is to all con-stituency MPs," he said.

Widow wants baby to 'fulfil husband's wishes'

The husband of the widow fighting a legal battle to have his haby had said this was what he would have wanted, the Court of Appeal was told yesterday. Lord Lester QC, represent-

ing Diane Blood, said the question the three appeal judges had to address was not whether the couple were right in having that joint wish but whether there was a legal justification for not respecting that desire. Mrs Blood, 31, is challenging

rulings by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority which hanned her from using her dead husband Stephen's frozen sperm, as she did not have his written permission. The HFEA also told Mrs Blood she could not take the sperm abroad for treat- which tragically later arose."

ment in a foreign clinic. A sperm sample was taken from Mr Blood while he was in a coma. "Had he been conscious there is no doubt he would have signed the consent form," said Lord Lester.

Mrs Blood claims the rulings were unreasonable, and that her rights under European law superseded British legal restrictions. She says that when the sperm sample was taken from her husband he was still alive.

Lord Lester said: "As he lay dying he could not sign a written consent because he was deeply unconscious. Lord Lester added: "Mrs Blood is clearly honouring the wishes of herself and Stephen because they had discussed the very situation

"The Human Embryology and Fertilisation Authority say she is trapped by the law. She cannot have treatment in the UK because of the business of the written form. One question is whether this court can iree Mrs Blood from that trap.

Lord Lester said Mrs Blood could have had the treatment using her husband's sperm perfectly lawfully while he was alive, even if the medical team

barred Mrs Blood from taking her husband's sperm abroad for treatment, because if she could not obtain treatment here, it could not allow her to have it anywhere else.

The hearing was adjourned

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Mic constable's career was felly a catalogue of "shock-ale collaboration in the collaboratio eds was told yesterday. The 41-year-old male con-the made life at a West York-

Mation such a nightmare The woman - groping her bests, stradding her and repeticily making sexual comtices with clinical depression
and has been told by her dochathar the mid by her doc-Alter the 25 again. After the 25-year-old con-side complained about the hanent in October 1994, the

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• THE INDEPENDENT

the fact that these operation had over cancelled, he added We teel it is cruelty to them them to have to go through the torture Would sure she should be older now if she hadn't on. startly been put back." Mr. Harrids husband Be the farming the peaking public J.c. me the hospital - 12 Aut. Watt Oucenie to have die i in vain, he laid. Hope telle the word happen again. Mr. Harring, a former nur er, estimat helper, who had a trace had no heart hypars in activities to her local hospitals Law short in ? December and transferred to they allodaysh. er. Operations were schedule 12: 25 December, 24 Decembe

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Man Harried was then told Table 10 Would be or " January, Hower as it = language * Houghes the Liber and the second for th a the pressure ilv. saidie - - - valuble : To max ME in talkate from 1,400s The number and a substantial of the left ամ Մահերա**սկ**ութ and to be a ing an agent tree

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has already lasted a year.

Atlantic Ocean a year and a half

Shell has invited the six con-sortia, all from the UK or mainland Europe, to draw up

disposal around the end of 1997.

In 1995 Shell obtained govemment permission to dump the Spar in waters 7,000ft deep in the north-east Atlantic. But a dramatic "direct action" cam-

Dutch motorists and the disapproval of other European governments, forced a lastminute change of heart.

The environmentalists' argument was that deep-sea disposal set an appalling precedent and threatened serious damage to the ocean ecosystem. Shell argued, and the Government accepted, that the small quantities of oil, toxic metals and chemicals and radioactive salts inside the Spar posed no risk in the

Yesterday, Heinz Rotherstudied in detail, costed and

approved by ministers. dent of finding a more popular

Woman tells tribunal sex pest

ruined her police career A police constable's career was male officer was suspended front of her face and he moved you'. I said to him, 'Get off

> The next morning the woman confided in a colleague and then reported the incidents to a senior officer. She said: "I think he was very shocked. He said to me: 'We're going to have to do something about it, it's getting

Taxman on trial tells of gunmen and prostitution

Clandestine work took collector beyond normal rules

Graham Bell

حيكذا من الاعل

A senior tax official accused of bribery and corruption explained yesterday how he confronted gunmen armed with Kalashnikov rifles in his quest to reclaim unpaid tax for the Inland Revenue.

Michael Allcock was giving evidence on the opening day of the defence in his trial at the Old Bailey. He told jurors how his secret team of tax investigators operated in a clandestine way to reclaim large sums from rich foreign businessmen who owed substantial back-taxes to the

On one occasion Mr Allcock went with a superior to Spain to collect tax from a Middle Eastern millionaire.

"There were a lot of Lebanese gunmen present and I was told how one had previously assassinated a former prime minister in Paris," said Mr Allcock. "The man I was negotiating with always had a pistol at his side and he had a number of armed bodyguards in the house the whole time." Earlier Mr Anthony Arlidge

QC, outlining the case for the defence, painted the picture of a talented but flawed individual who had become one of the Inland Revenue's highest fliers. "Michael Allcock was one of the most effective, if not the

most effective tax gatherer in the special office." said Mr Mr Allcock would go where no one had ventured before and his group often topped a league table of results within the de-

partment, the QC told the court. But Mr Arlidge went on to describe how the pressure of work combined with his wife's diagnosis of cancer led him to seek solace in the arms of a prostitute. However, the QC stressed that the court was not to judge his morals, only whether or not he was guilty of corruption.

"You may think that he behaved like a four-letter man towards his wife, no doubt, but we



Michael Allcock: Denies any form of bribery

are not a court of morals, let alone one of sexual politics. We are to consider not that he behaved badly, but was he corrupt," Mr Arlidge said.

Mr Allcock's affair with the former model and call girl Michelle Corrigan began in 1989. His wife first became ill in 1988 and it was shortly after this that he and his wife took two holidays paid for by a businessman from the Middle East.

But Mr Allcock denies that this constituted any form of bribery as the businessman had no tax liability at the time of the holidays and only funded the trips out of generosity and in order to aid Mrs Allcock's recuperation.

Having left school at 16, with just five O Levels, Mr Allcock's rise to the senior position of group leader within the Inland Revenue had been spectacular. He joined the Colchester Dis-

trict Tax Office in 1966. Trained and qualified as a tax inspector, he was spotted as a recruit for the élite special-office team based in London in 1983.

"Special office was an investigative office set up to investi-

lax not appropriate to any other office." said Mr Allcock. "I was told that we were the

bottom line. When I started, I was given an empty desk and a telephone and told to get on with it. We were told to set our own agenda, we were the cut-ting edge and our rules and procedures were outside normal rules and procedures," Mr Allcock said.

Special-office investigators were encouraged to go and cultivate their own sources of intelligence and information. Seen after starting at the special of-fice, Michael Allcock used a social acquaintance of his wife, who worked as a stock market trader to arrange an informal visit to the Stock Exchange.

Mr Allcock's easy outgoing personality helped him form a number of personal relationships with Stock Exchange officials that led to an unprecedented and mutually beneficial co-operation between the Revenue and market regulators. These contacts set Allcock and his team on a series of trails that were eventually to net the Inland Revenue many millions of pounds in unpaid taxes.

One of the charges laid against the taxman relates to his receiving or accepting £155,000 in cash in bribes from foreign

For the defence, Mr Arlidge argued that Mr Allcock would give evidence to explain how he came by the money. Mr Arlidge told the jury how a childless elderly couple gave substantial sums of money to Mr Allcock and his wife Sally. "They came to regard Sally as the daughter they never had," said Mr Arlidge.

Michael Allcock, 47, from Colchester, Essex, pleads not guilty to 11 charges of bribery and corruption between 1987 and 1992. Hishan Alwan, 56, a consultant oil dealer from west London, denies three charges of attempting to bribe the Inland Revenue official.

The trial continues.

Brent Spar may be recycled to protect UK coastline

Nicholas Schoon

Environment Correspondent

Onshore training centre for offshore workers

Shell's Brent Spar oil platform could be turned into an artificial reef protecting vulnerable sections of the East Anglian coastline from erosion.

Another shortlisted scheme for the disposal of the 450ft structure, announced yesterday, is to slice it into huge steel rings, and use it to support a new pier at a Teesside dockyard. Ironically, this would be used to help scrap other North Sea oil and gas installations on land.

The oil company now has a shortlist of six engineering con-sortia with six different schemes for the disposal of the huge North Sea oil installation, following a selection process which

The Brent Spar, a huge floating oil tank, has been anchored in the deep waters of a Norwegian fjord since Shell aban- paign by Greenpeace, coupled

detailed plans and costings for a total of 11 schemes for disposing of the Spar. They include turning it into dock gates, a fish farm and an onshore training centre for offshore oil workers. Three of the 11 involve bringing the 14,500-tonne Spar to

shore and turning it into scrap.
Once the consortia have fleshed out their schemes and Shell is giving them a total of £1.5m to do so - the oil company will make its choice and seek Government approval for

Shell floats greener future for the oil platform no one wants

vastness of the ocean. mund, managing director of the Shell subsidiary which extracts British North Sea oil and gas, said disposal at sea still remained an option. It was the only option which had been

But the company was confi-

doned plans to dump it in the with a mass boycott of Shell alternative. "We are very optipetrol stations by German and mistic about what we are doing some really exciting solutions

have emerged."

Shell said it would make its final choice on the basis of technical feasibility, safety for the workers involved, overall damage to the environment and public acceptability - and that choice would compete with sea dumping on all these fronts.

It made no mention of cost, although this is bound to be a consideration. Dr Rothermund said any onshore disposal was bound to be more expensive

than sinking at sea. While Shell seems willing to spend the extra, the Government would not normally allow it to do so because oil companies can claim handsome tax relief on the costs. Shell has, however, already promised it would not seek the extra tax relief if it opted for onshore

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tor that she will never work as a police officer again. After the 25-year-old conrassment in October 1994, the to kiss her. She put her hand in

ing esexual harassments by a

.. The 41-year-old male con-

stable made life at a West York-

Leeds was told yesterday.

shine station such a nightmare for the woman - groping her erally made her feel "very, very rbreasts, straddling her and reuncomfortable". peatedly making sexual com-On one occasion, he made ments - that she went on sick comments as she was eating a leave with clinical depression and has been told by her doc-

launched. The woman is still off male colleague, a tribunal in sick and undergoing counselling, more than two years after the alleged offences. She told the tribunal that the officer often touched her, made suggestive comments and gencame to a head when her attacker came up behind her a few

sausage for her breakfast. On another occasion the officer straddled her as she sat in the snooker room and put his face towards her as if he was going

A ponce constant scatter was and a criminal investigation away. The woman, who worked me. "The man took his hand division, did not report the incident at the time. "I didn't think anyone would believe me. I though they'd just tell me not to be so stupid and just get on with it," she said. Matters

> weeks later. She said: "His left hand went over my left shoulder and down in between my police shirt and my jumper and came to rest on the top of my right breast. He

out of hand.

"I asked him what he meant by that comment and he told me that I wasn't the first officer to come and report an incident to

him and that he would have to take advice from a senior said to me I was going to bot- officer." The hearing was tle out then, I was going to grab adjourned until today.

Arafat set to gain from Bibi's stalling

PLO and Israel agree on middle of next year as date for military pull-out

Patrick Cockburn Jerusalem

A compromise between Israel and the PLO. Irong on mid-1998 as the date for the completion of Israel's military withdrawal from much of the West Bank, may soon end the political stalemate which began when a right-wing government won the Israeli election last May.

King Hussein of Jordan, supported by the United States and Egypt, won acceptance for the new date for the three-stage withdrawal from Yasser Arafat. the Palestinian leader, and Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's Prime Minister, late on Sunday night.

Negotiators were vesterday working out the details in a Jerusalem hotel, "If there are no surprises we should be able to finish today, said Hassan As-four, a Palestinian negotiator. "This is of immense signifi-cance for the right-wing Israeli

In persuading Mr Arafat to accept a delay in the Israeli withdrawal. King Hussein reportedly told him: "If you're too firm, Bibi [Netanyahu] will win and there won't be a Hebron with-

trust him, it is better to commit Netanyahu to a particular date for further redeployment. And if Netanyahu doesn't fulfill his commitment, you will be able to raise an international hue and he may only be offered 50 per

The US is to offer a guarantee for the date of Israel's departure, the first stage of which frontation will be postponed will be on 28 February and the second, eight months later. The from all Palestinian villages, is Mr Arafat agreed with the pre-

from 80 per cent of Hebron, the city of 120,000 people which is the capital of the southern West Bank. This was effectively partitioned under the 1995 agreement to protect 400 Jewish settlers in the city. For all Mr Netanyahu's claims to have improved the settlers' security, the new agreement differs lit-tle from the old.

Negotiations over Hebron became a prolonged trial of strength between Mr Arafat and Mr Netanyahu, which the Palestinian leader appears to have won. Six months ago he was ignored by the Prime Minister but today he is close to forcing him to sign a version of the Oslo accords, which Mr Netanyahu once denounced as a renunciation of Israel's historic right to the West Bank.

public, says Joseph Alpher, di-rector of the Israel/Middle East Office of the American Jewish Committee in Jerusalem and a leading Israeli expert on the

Mr Alpher warns there may He added: "Even if you don't be a time bomb contained in the agreement, as it does not spell out the extent of the territory from which Israel is to withdraw. Mr Arafat expects to get 90 per cent of the West Bank in 1998: cent. If Mr Netanyahu presses ahead with plans to expand the number of Israeli settlers, a conrather than averted.

Will the agreement touch final and biggest redeployment, off a revolt on the Israeli right? Seven out of 18 ministers are to take place no later than 31 said to oppose the Hebron August 1998, a year later than agreement. But they will be nervous of pushing Mr Netanyahu vious Israeli government. The towards a national unity govagreement opens the way for Is- ernment with Labour. The setrael's immediate departure tlers also have no political litically isolated.



Face to faith: Mr Arafat introducing King Hussein of Jordan to an ultra-Orthodox rabbi near the Palestinian leader's office in Gaza

alternative to Mr Netanyahu. But, as they showed when Baruch Goldstein massacred 29 people in Hebron in 1994, they turn to violence when po-

talks shows Mr Netanyahu overplayed his hand. He believed Labour had created exaggerated expectations among Pales-

lim quarter. Palestinian re- he had previously spurned. sponse was bloody. Fifteen

The September violence con-

in the opening of a tunnel in clearly caught by surprise. He unpredictable. They shifted Jerusalem exiting in the Musbegan to court Mr Arafat whom closer to Mr Arafat. Western Europe actively supported the Palestinian leader. After the

The history of the Hebron by provocations, culminating were killed Mr Netanyahu was Israeli leader was hardline and the US began to act as a mediator, limiting Mr Netanyahu's

Paris and Bonn hail Major, their flexible friend

Sarah Helm

John Major's latest ideas for a France and Germany pro-flexible" Europe, allowing posed in November that decinew treaty deal. Senior French and German

officials say that they now see signs of a compromise from Mr Major, which could allow them to pursue their next round of integration plans without Britain permanently isolated. and without an automatic British veto.

A deal on flexibility now appeared to be "95 per cent

Paris, officials expressed relief that, at last, Britain was talking, which was "encouraging".

countries to pool powers at sions on whether groups within different speeds, are being cau- the EU can share powers withtiously welcomed in Paris and out the rest should be taken by member states. Until now Mr Major has insisted that Britain must be able to veto any attempt by other nations to develop common policies without Britain, to ensure that it is not

Comments made by Mr Major in recent days, and outline proposals presented to the Dutch presidency, have given there" a source in Bonn said. In Britain's partners reason to

Any new EU rules on flexibility must take account of the following

 What areas of EU policy can the fast-stream pursue? Would areas with obvious cross-border implications, such as the single market, transport 2) Who should pay for policies pursued under this arrangement? Will those left in the slow lane be liable 3) Will those left out be able to join

hope that Britain may relax its stand on the use of the veto when it comes to "flexibility". The Prime Minister has not said he would relinquish the right to veto such moves. How-

Barriers to the new multi-speed Europe spond to this multi-speed decision making. How can the European Court's jurisdiction be varied to take account of different "core groups"? A Should it he for "core groups"?

later if they change their minds?
4) Will those left out have any say over policies taken by the fast-streamers? For example, if an inner core decide to set up their common police force, would those outside have any influence over that force? in the treaty setting out procedures for pursuing flexibility? Or should de-cisions to go "multi-speed" be tak-en on a case by case basis?

ever, in recent days, he has spoken out so enthusiastically in favour of a "flexible" Europe that his partners sense a concession. There are signs that France and Germany are also

rope, how will the citizen understand what on earth is going on? willing to compromise, allowing countries to veto moves towards "flexibility" where it can

to propose policies be shared by a

make the suggestion?

8) Europe is trying to get closer to the citizen. But in a multi-speed Eu-

be argued that their national in-

terest is jeopardised. The Prime Minister has

signalled that he is particularly open to his partners sharing greater policy-making in areas of immigration and criminal justice. His comments were enough yesterday to breathe new life into negotiations in Amsterdam on EU treaty reform.

While several of Britain's partners are rejoicing at any sign of British goodwill, in other quarters Mr Major's sudden display of enthusiasm for allowing Europe to pool powers at different paces is being viewed with scepticism. Pro-European critics in Britain describe the initiative as a risky ploy to buy off Tory Euro-sceptics in the run-up to the election.

Labour, which is likely to be

in power when the next treaty areas, such as transport and the termined to maintain Britain's veto over the rights of othercountries to pool sovereignty in core groups. Such moves could leave Britain isolated without influence at Europe's "top table" Labour says.

Within the European Commission the prospect of build-ing a flexible multi-speed Europe is sparking an increasingly fierce debate. Although flexibility could allow countries to continue to make progress towards greater integration, it could also bring about greater

fragmentation of the union. Flexibility would simply be

is signed later this year, is de-environment. The commission ket could be jeopardised, and countries might start asking for exemption from unpopular state-aid or competition policies.

The EU has already become increasingly "flexible", as different member states - particularly Britain - have recoiled from certain policy proposals. Flexibility may be a tempting idea for Mr Major because it appears to let Britain of the hook but EU purists don't like it at all." a senior commission official said.

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In the new treaty negotiations, however, several states see unworkable in many EU policy flexibility as the key to progress.

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Army mobilises as South Korea prepares for largest ever strike

Richard Lloyd Parry

showed signs of stepping back in a three-week-old labour dispute, but soldiers were being mobilised to run public services as South Korean workers prepared themselves for the first day of their biggest ever national

Ceremonies marking the beginning of the strike were soldiers were being prepared to held at midnight last night in 900 run trains and telecom offices firms nationwide. From 4am today, members of the officially recognised Federation of Korean Trade Unions were to embark on a range of stoppages from full strikes to work to rule. Tomorrow they will be joined

Confederation of Trade Unions, and shippard workers shouted and union leaders anticipate a turn-out of one million workers The government of President in hospitals, hotels, shipyards. Kim Young Sam yesterday television companies, public stration lacked the ferocity of transport, taxis, telecommuni-cations and banks. It will be the first time since 1987 that both blue- and white-collar workers have united, when widespread civil unrest forced the then military dictatorship to call democratic elections.

Two and a half thousand yesterday, and there were further confrontations between trade unionists and police outside Myongdong Roman Catholic cathedral in Seoul. where seven strike leaders are seeking sanctuary against arrest by the unauthorised Korean warrants. A few dozen banking compromising image which the

anti-government slogans at riot police blocking their route to the cathedral. But the demonprevious encounters, and the strikers eventually dispersed of their own accord. Twenty-thousand workers in

the Hyundai motor plant rallied in the city of Ulsan. Speaking

in Seoul, the strike leader. Kwon Young-gil said: "President Kim must decide what is more important: saving his face or the national economy." A senior figure in the New Korea Party (NKP), Lee Hongkoo, made a highly symbolic vis-it to the cathedral yesterday

morning, and met the Cardinal of Seoul, Stephen Kim, in an apparent attempt to soften the ungovernment has so far projected during the dispute. The argument is about two

legislative revisions - to a labour act and to a national security law, which were railroaded through the National Assembly in a secret session of NKP representatives on Boxing Day. The former gives new freedom to companies to lay off workers; the latter expands the powers of the Agency for National Security Planning, the former Korean CIA.

The unions are refusing to talk to the government until the bills are scrapped, along with the warrants for the arrest of their leaders. The visit of Mr Lee, the chairman of the NKP and in the running to succeed President Kim in elections in December, may represent a first attempt by

the government to find an elegant way of stepping down. Much now depends on the effectiveness of this week's general strike. Much of the action taken so far appears to be more symbolic than damag-ing, and while the unions put the numbers of strikers vesterday at 195,000, the government esti-mate was 65,000. A large turnout today and tomorrow will put renewed pressure on President Kim, but also risks alienating the public which so far appears moderately sympathetic to the

Significantly, the Seoul stock exchange has been virtually un-affected by the disturbances, and the share price of the beleaguered Hyundai Motor Corporation actually rose by

Lama could make Taiwan trip

Teresa Poole Peking

The Dalai Lama plans to visit Taiwan in a move which is certain to infuriate Peking.

Chin Hsin, head of the island nation's Chinese Buddhist Assiders Tibet to be an inclienable sociation, said yesterday: "We will arrange one or two speeches and he will visit some temples. He will have absolutely no official contacts or activities," Mr Chin said the visit could take place as soon as March. Any such trip would be seen by Peking as a double affront to the integrity of Chinese sovereigntv. China's government con-siders the exiled Tibetan leader

bitually accusing Taiwan of seeking de facto independence through its diplo- matic links.

However, any visit will also have to be handled carefully by part of China. The Dalai Lama will only be welcomed as a religious and not a political figure.

Peking will grimace at another meeting today when Taiwan's vice-president. Lien Chan, visits the Vatican and sees the Pope. China has already criticised this meeting, saying that it would be part of Taiwan's attempts to "create two Chinas". its UN veto, and a signal that it

of Hong Kong to the mainland, China's leaders are becoming increasingly aggressive in trying to undermine Taiwan's minimal diplomatic identity. On Friday, China vetoed a United Nations resolution to send peacekeepers to Guatemala, one of several Central American countries with diplomatic relations with Taipei rather than Peking. The resolution would have allowed 155 observers to go to Guatemala to monitor the

ended the 36 year civil war, Last week was the first time in 24 years that China has used With 1997 seeing the return is now prepared to be more

peace deal which it is hoped has

ruthless in seeking to undermine Taiwan. Guatemala has supported Taiwan's mostly symbolic attempts to regain a UN seat. A strident editorial yesterday in the official China Daily said: "Guatemala has to reap what it has sown.'

About 30 countries, mostly in Central America and Africa. recognise Taiwan rather than China, but Taipei received a severe blow in November when South Africa said it would switch allegiance to the mainland. That move leaves the Vatican as the most significant diplomatic ally, one which Taipei is doing everything it can



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life edling well. Not all Danes
libe celebrating this week's
method with frenzied pasping that after 25 years on the
lime, she is still going strong Or not be in still going strong Of referendums to end the onarch: there is not a whis-be, Margrethe and the insti-bionshe embodies is popular. Good Sex

at any age!

This new report by Dr. Robert

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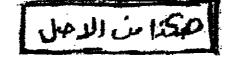
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Gunfire heard Sudanese accuse siege building

automatic-weapon fire was heard from the besieged Japanese ambassador's residence seconds after an International Red Cross mediator had walked from the building. Police commandos who are surrounding the building went on to immediate alert and the mediator, Michel Minnig, returned to the residence to check on the shots. There was no immediate news on why the Amaru Liberation Front had opened fire or on what but most analysts said that the bursts of gunfire were probably a message of defiance after Mr Minnig delivered the government's latest message.

Phil Davison - Lima

Backing for Milosevic falters

Officially it was a celebration of the Serbian New Year's another show of solidarity against the Serbian regime. There is still no sign that the President, Slobodan Milosevic, is ready to step down but yesterday Dobrica Cosic, who was once a famed nationalist and a Milosevic confidant, distanced himself, attacking the continued failure of the government to recognise opposition victories in municipal elections on 17 November.

North Korea, one of the most reclusive nations, will open its first site on the World Wide Web this week, its Japanese distributors said.

Reuter - Tokyo

sent to prison

Steffen Hartmann, 19, was jailed for three years for killing a British worker, Lee Hawthorn, by running him over in a stolen car and

from Peru Machine-gun and guerrillas of the Tupac

Eve but in reality a gathering in Belgrade last night was Steve Crawshaw - Belgrade

Spaniard set for top EU role The Spanish conservative

Jose Maria Gil Robles looked certain to be elected speaker of the European Parliament following a pact between its two biggest groups. Mr Gil Robles's European Popular Party and the European Socialist Party of the current speaker. Klaus Haensch of Germany, have agreed to alternate in the job every two and a half years.

Ethiopia of border shelling

Sudan said Ethiopia had attacked two border towns, and the Sudanese President, Omar Hussan el Bashir, had called for a general mobilisation. The general command of the Sudanese armed forces said units in Kurmuk and Qeissan, 360 miles from the capital, Khartoum, came under intensive shelling from inside Ethiopia. Cairo - Reuter

SA may sell arms to Syria

South Africa is considering selling tank firing control systems to Syria, and is studying whether it would violate Washington's Counterterrorism Act, which requires the US to sanction countries which provide lethal military equipment to state sponsors of terrorism.

AP - Johannesburg

Police to poison the atmosphere

Police in a town in Java plan to use cobras to break up demonstrations and compel suspects to confess, "The cobras will be used to intimidate suspects ... and to disperse mass riots," Alex Bambang Riadmojo, of the Bekasi police, was quoted as saying AP – Jakarta

Hermit state gets Web habit

Briton's killer

dragging his body six miles.

Clinton pleads for delay in sex case

Rupert Cornwell Washington

lling

In a precedent-setting case, lawyers for the former Arkansas state employee Paula Corbin Jones yesterday urged the US Supreme Court to compel President Bill Clinton to answer while in office the sexualharassment lawsuit she has brought against him.

In oral arguments, Gilbert Davis, lead attorney for Ms Jones, urged that the case go forward forthwith, as ordered last year in a federal appeals court judgment Mr Clinton is now appealing. "Justice delayed is justice denied," Mr Davis said, noting that as a sit-ting president, Mr Clinton had already testified at length in two separate Whitewater trials, dealing with events before he entered the White House.

But in pleading for a post-ponement, Robert Bennett, representing the President. stressed the overriding importance of not disrupting the executive governance of the country. "Here you have a sitting President. We are saying 'We'll give Ms Jones her day in court. Only let's not do it now'."

Mr Bennett seemed on shakier ground when he cited a 1982 court ruling for Richard Nixon, in effect granting a president immunity from civil suits arising from his conduct in office. The comparison seemed irrelevant, Chief Justice William Rehnquist and various colleagues complained, noting that the alleged incident dated back to 1991, and had nothing to do with Mr Clinton's duties as

Governor of Arkansas. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wondered whether the temporary immunity sought by Mr Bennett would apply if a case involving the President con-

Russia's increasingly bad-tem-

pered relationship with the

West soured further yesterday

when Boris Yeltsin revealed

his latest ploy to foil Nato

expansion - a proposal to forge

ahead with a union with the

wayward former Soviet repub-

lic of Belarus. Sergei Yastrzhembsky,

spokesman for the pneumo-nia-stricken President, revealed

nia-stricken President, revealed end of the year, Mr Yas-yesterday that Mr Yeltsin had trzhembsky said.

Phil Reeves

Moscow

the leader of the court's conservative faction, was sceptical about Mr Clinton's contention that the case would be a timeconsuming distraction. It might mean the President had to give

up some golf games, he noted.

Ms Jones's lawyers said the case was relatively uncomplicated, a matter of one person's word against another's, "This will not take very long," Mr Davis told reporters after the hour of oral arguments. "A president is the same as you or me in his personal capacity ... his office has privileges and immunities, but he cannot claim a personal privilege."

That is the issue the justices must rule on, before July. However, another lawyer for Ms Jones again left open the possibility of an out-of-court settlement, perhaps similar to the one the two sides almost achieved in 1994, just before Ms
Jones filed her \$700,000 (£417,000) suit that Mr Clipton had made sexual advances to her in a Little Rock hotel.

Many court-watchers suspect they will "split the difference", deferring the trial until Mr Clinton has left office but allowing gathering of evidence,

or "discovery," to go ahead.

Ms Jones's representatives again denied she is a gold-digger, or the creature of right-wing anti-Clinton groups. She wanted simply to restore her good name. "Money is not a factor in this case," Mr Davis said. And that seemed the pre-

vailing view of demonstrators outside the Supreme Court building. Many bore placards with slogans like "President or King?" and "Stop Ducking Your responsibility, Mr President." A president "has the right to protection in the course of his duties," said one protester. Washington office worker Kristi

written to Belarus's leader,

Alexander Lukashenko, saying

both countries should now

consider holding referenda over

"one form or another" of

ing, Mr Yeltsin appears to be

contemplating a close marriage with his Slavic neighbours; his

letter mentioned establishing a

shared budget, common cur-rency and taxation laws and

Although details were lack-

Bulgaria workers gain ground Adrian Bridge

It was clear the letter was in- to impose economic sanctions

other example of Russia's more after forcing through a new

over spying, and Russian threats meet democratic standards.

constitution.

Central Europe Correspondent Protesters calling for fresh elections in Bulgaria yesterday succeeded in winning the workers over to their side, thereby piling yet more pressure on the

country's ruling Socialist Party. Hundreds of dockers and oil refinery workers in the Black Sea ports of Varna and Burgas downed tools in what was expected to be the first of a waveof strikes. Thousands of miners cerned a domestic issue such as Hamrick, "but sexual harass-child custody. Antonin Scalia, ment is not one of those duties." | are expected to follow suit to-day with tens of thousands of The Socialist Party last night in return for opposition support peacefully.

tended to be seen as part of

Russia's counter-offensive

against Nato's proposals to ex-

pand into Eastern Europe, iniially into Poland, the Czech

But the manoeuvre is yet an-

hostile policy towards the West,

and will stoke up the ill feeling

that has recently surfaced on

several other fronts - notably.

sell arms to Cyprus, squabbles

Republic and Hungary.

workers nationwide joining in With the demonstrations in

Bulgaria only entering their second week, the enlisting of trade-union support marked a significant triumph for the op-

The Bulgarian economy with annual inflation running at more than 300 per cent and average monthly salaries down to the equivalent of £12 - is in a perilous state and a full-blooded general strike would be dis-

Russia's wooing of Belarus is

certain to grate with Western

leaders, who only two months

ago watched on disapproving-

ly as Mr Lukashenko helped

himself to dictatorial powers

Yesterday, the Council of Europe which specialises in

human rights, suspended Be-

larus's "special guest" status,

saying the constitution failed to

appeared keen to compromise. After a crisis meeting of the party leadership, a statement said that the party would be prepared to discuss an early general election with the opposition and that it had drafted a programme aimed at bringing

مكنا بن الاجل

the country out of its political and economic crises. The offer echoed Sunday's proposition made by Socialist Party leader Georgi Parvanov that elections, which are not due for almost two years, could

for another Socialist-led government in the medium In addition to calling for

strike action, opposition leaders are also planning to stage daily street demonstrations, modelled along the lines of those in Serbia. Tens of thousands of people

were again on the streets of Sofia yesterday, though unlike the protests on Friday, when more than 100 were injured in clashes with riot police, the be brought forward to this year demonstration passed

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Meet Megan.

Why republicanism would get short shrift in Denmark

integrated energy systems by the over Moscow's willingness to

Russia urges Belarus union

The souvenir stalls of Copenhagen are groaning under royal memorabilia. Almost every day a new book appears, promising another revelation, but delivering little more than insights into the sovereign's passion for embroidery.

Still, the commemorative issues and kitsch marking the silver jubilee of Queen Margrethe II are selling well. Not all Danes will be celebrating this week's anniversary with frenzied passion, but most will be quietly rejoicing that, after 25 years on the throne, she is still going strong.

Of referendums to end the monarchy there is not a whisper. Margrethe and the institution she embodies is popular, to the extent that, if Denmark

Good Sex

This new report by Dr. Robert Willix explains how you can enjoy sex well into your 90s. It examines the common reasons sexual activity declines and what you can do about it with food supplements, diet and exercise, and (in rare cases) prescription drugs. Just getting healthy (and clearing your body of tranquilisers and lilood pressure medications) is often enough. FREE copies of this report are available from Carnell Ltd, Dept GSA1, Alresford, Colchester, Essex

CO7 8AP. -

Britain's royal family might well envy Queen Margrethe, writes Imre Karacs

were to become by some act of God a republic overnight, "she would be elected its president,"

according to a royal-watcher.

Margrethe's relationship with
her subjects and the press might well be envied by her second cousin in England. Instead of pursuing her relentlessly, Danish tabloids meekly follow her weekly agenda, and are first to leap to her defence when her honour has been slighted. This happened last week,

when a Swedish paper denounced her because of her smoking. The Swedish ruler, the journalist noted, smoked out of the range of the cameras, whereas Margrethe puffed away publicly even while visiting a care centre for asthmatics, ashtray-hearing servants in tow. "Let the Queen smoke in

peace," thundered a Danish tabloid; "Mind your own business. Sweden", screamed Copenhagen's equivalent of the Sun. The Swedish press had to apologise, hiring an electronic wife. They all go about their billboard in Copenhagen to business without fuss, on foot flash the message: "Our read-rather than bicycles, and coners beg the Queen's pardon".

Today Margrethe hosts a thanksgiving service for her closet-smoking relatives in Scandinavia, and tomorrow she will ride through Copenhagen in a carriage procession, and attend a command performance does not intervene directly in behave. In a small country, we



Queen Margrethe: Goes out to do the shopping herself

the evening. That will be the end of the pageantry - a small celebration for a no-frills house- favourably reviewed. hold that prides itself on its low lower profile.

er, the Queen and her Consort, two princes and one princely duct themselves admirably. The abiding image is of the Queen returning to the Amalienborg Palace from a day's shopping,

laden with carrier bags.

Margrethe meets her minisof the Danish Royal Ballet in political matters, she can be out-would know if they didn't."

spoken on moral issues. In her New Year messages she often scolds Danes for their shortcomings, urging them repeat-edly to open their society to foreigners. She is married to one herself, a French aristocrat named Henri de Monpezal and her daughter-in-law hails from Hong Kong.

Unlike some of her relatives abroad, the Queen combines moral authority with intellectual prowess. She speaks English, French, German and Swedish fluently, has studied archaeology, philosophy and law at Cambridge, the LSE, the Sorbonne and Danish universities. Her CV also credits her with the translation of a book by Simone de Beauvoir, illustrations for the Danish edition of Lord of the Rings, and abstract paintings that have been exhibited and

There are, naturally, some cost to the tax-payer and even flaws in her character but she makes no attempt to hide them. The royal family consists of She is headstrong, has a sharp six people - the Queen Moth- tongue, keeps her family on a tight rein, and admits that, in the 57th year of her life, she is showing no sign of mellowing with age. With no major scandals lurking, the Danish press can only fawn. "I wish I could tell you about some bad things, but there just aren't any." said Bo Draebel, court correspondent of Copenhagen's leading broadsheet, Berlingske Tidende. "Our royal family know how to

Megan's reading a booklet that carefully explains the whole process of buying a house.

Megan's buying a house - well actually in her case it's a ground floor flat. Like most people, she was finding the whole process quite overwhelming, but last week she phoned for a free Midland guide and is now feeling

pretty confident. It contains details on everything from making an offer to getting the right mortgage. So if you're thinking of buying a house why not call us and ask for one of our guides (there's one especially for first-time buyers). In due course we'll also send

you information about our latest mortgage packages which, like our guides, are designed to make buying a house as easy as possible.



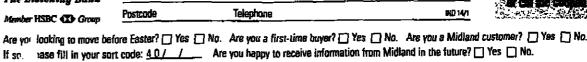


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Kenneth Coyte

Kenneth Coyte was a leading figure in television news, but because his work was done behind the scenes, he was little known to the general public. For the past 16 years he was the Chief Executive of Worldwide Television News, one of the two great international agencies which dominate the provision of news in pictures to television stations throughout the world. her death a year ago. And in New York Coyte came into The other contender in this highly competitive process is Reuter's Television - formerly contact with television news, Visnews. The scale of these then in its infancy. He secured operations is huge. WTN sends out, 24 hours a

a foothold in this new medium as a reporter for UPMT. the day, a stream of news pictures first agency set up to provide which are used by more than a news in pictures to television stations. UPMT was a joint thousand nation-wide broadcasters, local stations and cable venture by 20th Century Fox, operators. Ted Turner's satellite and United Press, the American station. CNN, draws much of its wire service which supplied news from WTN. written news to newspapers and radio stations.

Coyte rose quickly to be-come UPMT's International

Manager, based in Paris. Early

in the 1960s he made his only

break from television news,

when he moved to London as

Regional Manager for the Unit-

ed Press written news service.

Coyte was born in Leeds in 1932, the son of a chartered accountant. He was educated at Blundell's School in Devon. and did National Service in the Royal Engineers. He then read Law at Sidney Sussex College. Cambridge, where he edited the

After graduating he took, in 1954, the bold step of freedrawn back into television. lancing in New York, where he UPMT had found its position became a contributor to in the international news Newsweek and to the Saturday market gravely weakened by Review. This contact with the the rise of a competitor, Vis-America of the mid-1950s was news, founded mainly by the to forge two links of great sig-nificance for his future. He BBC, and, within the lucrative United States market, by the met, and married, Patsy Mache. news services of the three main It was a marriage of enduring happiness which lasted until networks, NBC, CBS, and It found an ally in ITN, who

ioined it to form a new company, UPITN. Coyte became its vice-president in charge of its operations outside North America. It was a formidable task. He had not only to organise the coverage of the news, but also to sell the service, and to organise its distribution at a time when the shipping of film by air freight was giving way to transmission by satellite.

For the next decade he had to do this against a background of constant strain and upheaval within UPITN. Many of the ITV programme companies who owned ITN disliked this risky venture, and begrudged it the capital necessary for its development. Attempts to secure

In 1968 Kenneth Covte was capital from other sources brought short-term respite at the price of even greater longterm problems.

In 1971 Paramount Pictures, flush with cash after the success of The Godfather, bought a half share in UPITN. They hoped to base a new fourth television network in the United States on a nationwide UPITN nightly news show. The show was excellent, being produced by Burt Reinhardt and Reese Schonfeld, who were to go on to mount CNN for Ed Turner. But the costs of transmitting it by landline and micro-wave (satellite transmission within the US had not then been developed) proved too high. After a few months, and the loss of a million dollars, Paramount called

The man who bought Paramount's shares brought problems of another kind. John McGoff was the owner of a small chain of newspapers, and a radio station, in Michigan. Yet he produced \$1.3m in cash for

Four years later the mystery was explained. When the

South Africa, a Commission of Inquiry found that its Minister of Information, Cornelius Mulder, had advanced the money to McGoff in the belief that part-ownership of an international news agency would bring propaganda advantages for South Africa. He was greatly mistaken. Not only were UPI and ITN, with their own reputations at stake, watchful for anything in the UPITN service

which smacked of bias, but

they were aware that any hint

of bias could wreck the sale of

the service.

These upheavals placed a great strain on Kenneth Coyte. Though fully aware of the precarious position of the company, he maintained a steady, eerful, calm, recruiting and encouraging staff, travelling frequently, and for long distances, to sell the service in the face of fierce competition from the lavishly endowed Visnews competitor. His determination was rewarded when, in 1979, the truth about McGoff's finances was revealed. ITN

moved swiftly to buy his shares,



and remove any trace of a link, however tenuous, with the apartheid regime of South Africa. And they made Coyte chief executive, with the title of president

He succeeded brilliantly. The 1980s saw a rapid growth in telecompany was changed to the more easily remembered Worldwide Television News -WIN. He diversified the product. Alongside hard daily news he offered special packages dealing with sport, entertainment, the arts, travel and the environment. By 1986 the company was firmly in profit. He installed it in new, custom-built premises at Camden Lock in London. During his years in charge the turnover increased Above all, Coyte kept WTN

in the forefront of news gathering. It came triumphantly through the severe test of the Gulf War. It could rightly claim that it dominated that story, with a long list of stories in which it was first with its coverage.

Kenneth Coyte was very much a Yorkshireman - so much so that it was only partly in jest that he told his children that they should ensure that their children were born withvision stations throughout the in the boundaries of Yorkshire, world. Coyte saw to it that the so that they could play cricket

newcomers became subscribers for the county without arguto his service. The name of the ment. A sturdy, powerfully built man, he had a quiet manner, never forcing his opinions on others, but ready, when the time came, with a well thought out view of his own. His Yorkshire character came through above all in his steely determination and in his sense of humour. Cahn in crisis - and the first 10 years of UPITN were one long crisis - he could see, and relish the elements of comedy which are part of most crises. He was both a good editor and a good chief executive. skilled at selecting subordinates, and firm and yet relaxed in his dealings with them.

Though his life was spent out of the spotlight, Kenneth Coyte was one of the great pioneers of television journalism, a man of high standards, courage, and human warmth.

Kenneth Anthony Coyte, journalist and television executive born Leeds 6 February 1932; married Patsy Mache (deceased; three sons, three daughters); died

Cavan O'Connor

The lilting-voiced singer of Irish songs Cavan O'Connor spent virtually his whole life on the stage, Handsome, with an attractive tenor voice, in the Twenties and Thirties he won all hearts as he made his entrance dressed in a white suit with crumpled white slouch hat to match. He strolled on and off, performing popular songs in which he had the audience chorusing with him, always ending with such sentimental numbers of the day as When I Leave the World Behind" and "In the Still of the Night". But the songs for which he was best known were "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen" and his signature, "I'm Only a Strolling

Clarence Patrick O'Connor. as he was christened by his parents, left Ireland for England in 1899, shortly after he was born, when the family settled in Nottingham. His Irish father died a few years later and his English mother, in straitened circumstances and with a child to support, found little Clarrie odd jobs at an early age before the First World War. He was

Duncan Wood

he got work wherever he could as a busker and pub singer; despite his untrained voice he made quite a mark at working men's clubs, supplementing his mother's income.

While still a youngster he developed a typically light voice with a strong Irish lilt. He came down to London from Nottingham in his late teens with the professional stage in his sights. He took bookings wherever he could find them and a "singing Irishman" in those days was welcome on any bill, which would include such distinctive national types as Talbot O'Farrell, the Scots Will Fyffe and "Our Hebrew Friend" Julian Rose.

Young Clarence did more than play variety and was set on singing straight in his spare time. He knocked on the door of the head of the Royal Academy of Music, Sir Hugh Allan, and he, impressed by O'Connor's voice and personality, gave him the chance to study musical theory, an asset that enabled the ex-busker to make more serious stage appearances, and to drop his original stage name, Clarence Patrick, for that of Cavan O'Connor.

He was at the Old Vic as a

singing "super" in the early Twenties and recorded his first solo song for the BBC in the old Savoy Hill days of 1925. He was offered engagements at Covent Garden and courses of learning to sing in international seasons as a chorus boy in Italian and German.

This varied existence led to work with Sir Nigel Playfair at the popular Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, when he showed his true versatility by playing small roles and understudying in such operas as The Duenna (1924), The Beggar's Opera (1925) and A.P. Herbert's Riverside Nights (1926). Assorted singing roles followed when he appeared in Viennese operetta at the old Gaiety Theatre in the West End.

An association with Hugo Rignold gave him work as a regular soloist with such musical combinations as Fred Hartley's Quintet, where the various members included such talents of the day as George Melachrino, Chappie d'Amato and

Alfredo Campoli. It was when Eric Maschwitz, then the BBC's Head of Variety (radio), christened Cavan "The Vagabond Lover" in the

recording star really took off, and bookers with musical managers lined up for the Irishman who was fast becoming a household name. From the mid-Twenties to the mid-Thirties he made hundreds of records.

By this time his bill-matter (the description of the artist) was "only a strolling vagabond" and "the vagabond lover". Under such names he made many radio appearances on Monday Night At Eight and The Irish Half-Hour, and in 1935 he started to sing on a weekly programme, The Vagabond

From then on he topped the bill in variety halls, to which he returned more or less permanently after the Second World War. He played Anstralia and South Africa, and home in the Sixties and Seventies became for some while a memory as he toured Britain with the "old times" stars assembled by Don Ross in Thanks for the

He also formed the Avonmore Trio, in which his wife Rita, under the stage name of Rita Tate (she was a niece of the celebrated singer Maggie Teyte), played the piano as ac-

other son, Garry O'Connor, is a well-known literary biogra-pher.) When the old Hackney Empire reopened a few years ago, Cavan O'Connor headed the bill with his wife.

During the Eighties, when he was making only the occasional stage appearance, I invited him to appear in Old Stages, the BBC radio series I had written with the late Brian Haines, which ran for a number of years. Here he ran the gamut of popular music emotions and there was plenty of sentiment in the voice still, although his endearing personality, comple-mented on stage by scenic effects such as a backdrop of poppies, fields and haystacks,

could not be seen. He may not have been one of the giants like Vesta Tilley, Marie Lloyd, Dan Leno or even George Robey, Albert Chevalier, or Little Titch, but Cavan O'Connor made his mark, and will be remembered by all who loved the halls, variety and its attendant arts.

Clarence Patrick ("Cavan") O'Connor, singer, born I July 1899: married 1929 Rita Odoli-1930s that O'Connor's career as companist for him and one of Teyte (three sons); died London a singing variety, radio and his three sons the guitar. (An-11 January 1997.

wounded in the war at the age of 16 while serving in the Roy-Photograph: Hulton Getty al Horse Artillery. Demobbed,

Wherever the craft of television comedy is discussed Duncan Wood's name will be mentioned as a pioneer and innovator. First, as a BBC producer, he was responsible for shows such as Hancock's Half Hour and Steptoe and Son, and later, as Head of Light Entertainment at Yorkshire Television from 1973, his comed by a portly, balding mancredits included Rising Damp, starring Leonard Rossiter.

Vagabond Lover': O'Connor in his dressing-room, 1950

Wood was born in Bristol and had already done some work as a sound modulator for the BBC there by the age of 21, when I first met him on board the Georgic, a troopship taking National Servicemen, which we both were, to the Middle and Far East. After forming a ship's orchestra, he playing the trumpet and I making a misdirected stab at guitar and vocals, we

where he developed his liking for curries. His commanding officer was David Jacobs.

Some 10 years later, having lost touch with Wood, I turned up at the BBC Television Centre in Wood Lane, west London, as a fledgling producer/director, and in the bar there was weldarin who bought me a drink and showed me a dog-eared photo-graph of two slim youths in front of a row of palm trees. "Who are they?", the man

"I've no idea," I replied. "They're us, you tool." Duncan Wood snarled, for it was him, and it was us. He had heard that I was going to work at the centre and was determined to be the first in with a greeting.

By this time, in the early Six-

name in the world of television, having already produced and directed the television series which succeeded the radio programme Hancock's Half Hour, written by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson; and also the equally timeless Steptoe and Son, written by the same pair. Wood was responsible for the first colour comedy programme, The World of Beachcomber, star-ring Spike Milligan, and directed the first Royal Variety Performance in 1962, at the London Palladium. His name appeared on countless other comedy shows, many of which are currently being repeated, becoming one of the BBC's most respected television producers with awards and Baftas to his

In 1972 he became Head of ties, Wood was a well-known Comedy at the BBC, before

painter, 1836; The Rev Wilson

Cartile, founder of the Church Army,

leaving the Corporation in 1973 on a show which he employed to take over as Yorkshire Television Head of Light Entertainment, a new post created especially for him. There he was responsible for, among other successes, the setting up of Yorkshire's comedy jewel in the crown, Rising Damp, which made the incomparable Leonard Rossiter a household name. He was also responsible for Only When I Laugh (with James Bolam), In Loving Memory (starring Thora Hird) and game shows including Winner Takes All and the long-running 3-2-1. He rose to become Controller of Entertainment Programmes and retired in 1984. Although the word "executive" now carries little or no

kudos, I remember Wood's authoritative behaviour in his position as executive producer

me to direct. I had finished recording a scene which involved the American female lead and completed all her necessary work in the show. She asked to see the scene played back to her on the studio floor. I explained to her that, as we were fast running out of recording time, she might wait until we had finished recording and then I'd be glad to show it to her. She sat down on a chair and refused to allow us to continue until she had seen and approved her work. The assistant director telephoned Wood and requested that he come to the set

and straighten things out. Almost immediately he was there, listened to the problem in a quiet corner, and, a couple of minutes later, gently but firmly led the actress to her

dressing room to discuss things, allowing us to finish the recording in the allotted time. Later the actress left to catch her plane, telling me that there was no necessity to re-run the scene. She was very happy. I never found out what steps Wood had taken to bring about her new-found sense of wellbeing but I was told it involved a sharp telephone call to her agent in Los Angeles.

Duncan Wood represented a type of television producer/ director that is fast disappearing. He was carefully selective. knowing exactly the effect for which he was aiming. He was a meticulous planner too - one had to be in those days when programmes and audiences were live. He could judge almost ence laughter and reaction time ary 1997.

 should be added to a script (this was before the laughter was "canned") and knew when additional dialogue and cuts were needed to make up or save time. When directing, everybody knew who was in charge. Wood was rather a solitary

man: it was hard to believe he had been married and divorced twice. He owned up to having two main vices in his life, both from Scotland, whisky and golf. Joe McGrath

Duncan Wood, television pro-ducer: born Bristol 24 March 1925; Head of Comedy, BBC television 1972-73; Head of Light Entertainment then Controller. Entertainment Programmes, Yorkshire Television 1973-84; twice married (marriages disto the second how much audi- solved); died London 11 Janu-



Light entertainment: Wood in Photograph: BBC

Births, **Marriages** & Deaths

BIRTHS

PRESTON: On 4 January to Susan and James, a son, Toby Alan.

Announcements for Gszette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adop-tions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial ser-vices, Wedding anniversuries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazetic Editor, The Independent, I Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 or faxed to 0171-293 2016, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Canada proprogrammits (motions, france Gazette amouncements (notices, func-tions, Forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or fared); charges are £10 a line, VAT extra. Please luctude a daytime telephone number.

Wills

Lord Amery of Lustleigh, of London SW1, the former politician, left es-tate valued at £4,345,502 net. He left all his political papers, literary work, manuscripts, photographs, illustrations and recorded matter to Winston Churchill MP. the Hon Leopold Amery and John Boteler.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS The Princess Royal attends a lunch to mark the Centenary Year of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in Scotland, Clasgow Giry Chambers: and as President, America Health Trust, attends a distance for the US Sup-porters Club. Buck's Club. London WI.

Birthdays

Captain Sir Alastair Aird, Comptroller to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, 66; Professor Sir Melville Arnott, cardiologist, 88: Mr Peter Barkworth, actor, 68: Miss Carol Bellamy, executive director of Unicef, 55; Mr Richard Briers, actor, 63; Baroness Brooke of Ystradfellte. Party. 89; Lord Catto, president, Morgan Grenfell, 74; Miss Faye Dunaway, actress, 56; Miss Maina Gielgud, ballerina, 52; Miss Andrée Grenfell, former managing director. Glemby International, 57; Mr Brian Hardie, cricketer, 47; Sir Martin Holdgate, president, Zoological So-ciety of London, 66; Sir Arthur Hoole, solicitor and former chairman of the College of Law, 73; Mr Jack Jones, singer, 59; Professor Sir Hans Kornberg, former Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, 69; Mr John Lever, Headmaster, Canford School, 45; Mr Warren Mitchell, actor, 71; Mr Grevor Nunn, theatre director, 57; Sir Neil Pritchard, former ambassador to Thailand, 86; Mr Christopher Reeves, banker, 61; Sir Vernon Sec-combe, chairman, Plymouth Hospi-tals NHS Trust, 69; Mile Caterina Valente, guitarist and singer, 66: Mr Bill Werberniuk, snooker player, 41; Sir John Woodcock, former HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, 65; Mr Roger Young, chief executive, Scottish Hydro-Electric, 53.

Anniversaries

Births: Waldemar the Great, King of Denmark, 1131; John Baptist Vanloo, painter, 1684; Benedict Arnold, soldier and traitor, 1741; Ludwig Alois Friedrich von Köchel, naturalist and writer, 1800; Matthew Fontaine Maury, oceanographer, 1806; Ignace-Henri-Jean-Théodore Fantin-Latour,

1847: Pierre Loti (Louis-Marie-Julien-Viaud), novelist, 1850; Jean Mieczysław de Reszke, tenor, 1850; Dr Albert Schweitzer, missionary surgeon, 1875; Hugh Lofting, author, 1886; Hal Roach, film producer and director, 1892; John Roderigo Dos Passos, novelist, 1896; Sir Cecil Walter Hardy Beaton, photographer and stage designer, 1904; Russ Columbo (Ruggiero de Rudolpho Columbo), singer and actor, 1908; Joseph Losey, film director, 1909. Deaths: Odoric of Pordenote, Franciscan and traveller, 1331; Thomas ciscan and travener, 1551, thomas Coventry, first Baron Coventry, judge, 1640; Dr John Boyse, schol-ar and translator of the Bible, 1643; Pietro Francesco Cavalli, composer, 1667; Edmond Halley, astronomer, 1742; John Pindar ("Peter Findar"), physician and poet, 1819; George Dance the younger, surveyor and architect, 1825; Jean-Augustearchitect, 1825; Jean-Anginste-Dominique Ingres, painter, 1867; Lord Napier of Magdala, soldier, 1890; Henry Edward Manning, Car-dinal, 1892; Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, 1892; Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), author, 1898; Ernst Abbe, physicist and industrialist, 1905; Harry Furniss, caricaturist and illustrator, 1925; Joaquin Turina, composer, 1949; ophrey DeForest Bogari, actor, 1957; Sir Robert Anthony Eden, first Earl of Avon, statesman, 1977; Anais Nin, writer and poetess, 1977; Peter Finch (William Mitchell), actor, 1977; Gilbert Spencer, artist, 1979. On this day: the Great Frost Fair began on the Thames, 1205; the

Hampton Court Conference began,

1604; Norway was ceded to the King

1814; an attempt was made on the

life of Napoleon III by Felice Orsini, an Italian revolutionary, 1858;

of Sweden by the King of Denmark

Oueen Victoria heard a concert relayed to her by telephone, 1878; Puccim's opera *Tosca* was first per-formed, Rome, 1900; an earthquake in Jamaica destroyed Kingston and killed over 1,000, 1907; German warships bombarded Yarmouth, 1918; in the Italian general election 29 Fascists were returned, 1921; the oil pipeline between Kirkuk and Haifa was inaugurated, 1935; Winston Churchill and Franklin Roo-sevelt met at Casablanca, 1943; the Players' Theatre, London, opened, 1946; Marshal Tito was elected first president of the Yugoslav republic. 1953; the musical show The Boy Friend was first produced, London, 1954; the law requiring motorists to wear scat-belts was made permanent, 1986. Today is the Feast Day of St Antony Pucci, St Barbasymas or Barbascemin, St Daths, St Felix of Nola, St Kentigern or Mungo, St Macrina the Elder, The Martyrs of Mount Sinai and St Sava.

National Gallery: Alexander Sturgis, "Nymphs and Shepherds (ii): Claude, Echo and Narcissus", 1pm.

British Museum: Flizabeth Baquedano, "Feather-serpent Images: Teotihuacun to the Aztecs". L 15pm. National Portrait Gallery: John Cooper, "A Private View of the Old Masters Exhibition, Royal Academy University College London, London WC1: Professor Lewis Wolpert,

1.15pm.

Lectures

1888", L 10pm; Philip Hoare in conversation with Neil Tennant, "Noël Coward", 7.15pm (tickets required). "Why Do People Believe in Things For Which There is No Evidence?",

Exeter University: Graeme Odgers, "Competition Policy and Utility Regulation", 5.15pm.

Human rights infringed at Saunders trial LAW REPORT

European Court of Human Rights: 17 December 1996

The use by the prosecution at an accused's trial for offences of fraud and conspiracy of statements which the accused had been compelled by law to make to Department of Trade and Industry investigators constituted an infringement of the accused's right not to incriminate himself and was accordingly a breach of article 6 of the European Convention on Hu-man Rights, which guarantees the right to a fair trial.

The European Court of Human Rights ruled by 16 votes to 4 that there had been a violation of article 6 of the Convention in the trial of the applicant, Ernest Saunders, and others involved in the "Guimpess affair". The court declined to award compensation but awarded him £75,000

in costs and expenses. Mr Saunders was tried between April 1989 and August 1990 on 15 counts including theft, false accounting and conspiracy. His prosecution followed an investigation by the DTI into the conduct of a battle between Guinness plc, of which Mr Saunders was then chief executive officer, and

14 January 1997

During the DTI investiga-tion, Mr Saunders was required by law, on pain of being fined or imprisoned for contempt of court, to answer questions put to him by the inspectors. At his subsequent trial the prosecution were permitted to use in evidence transcripts of the statements made by him to the DTI inspectors. Mr Saunders was convicted and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. This was reduced on appeal to two and a half years, but save on one count his

Mr Saunders complained to the European Court of Human Rights that the use at his trial of the DTI material infringed his right against selfincrimination and that his trial was accordingly unfair.

Article 6 provides: 1. In the determination of . . . any criminal charge against him, every-one is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tri-bunal established by law.

The European Court of Human Argyll plc for the takeover of Rights said the right not to in- dence might be deployed in

Distillers plc, which Guinness finally bought in April 1986. criminate oneself, like the right to silence, was a generally to silence, was a generally recognised international standard which lay at the heart of the notion of a fair procedure under article 6. The right, which had close links with the presumption of innocence in article 6.2, was primarily concerned with respecting the will of the accused to remain silent. It did not extend to the use in criminal proceedings of material which might be obtained from the accused under legal compulsion but which had an existence independent of the accused's will, such as breath, appeals against conviction were blood and urine samples.

Whether there had been infringement of the accused's right not to incriminate himself depended on the use made by the prosecution at the trial of the statements which he had been obliged to give the inspectors under pain of sanction. It was irrelevant that they might not have been selfincriminating. The right not to incriminate oneself could not reasonably be confined to admissions of wrongdoing or

to directly incriminating re-

marks, since even neutral evi-

In this case, the prosecution

had used Mr Saunders' statements to the DTI in an incriminating manner, to cast doubt on his honesty and to establish his involvement in an unlawful share support operation. Part of the transcript of his answers to the inspectors had been read out to the jury over a three-day period despite his objections.

Accordingly, there had been an infringement of his right not to incriminate himself. The public interest in combating fraud could not be invoked to justify the use of answers compulsorily obtained in non-judicial investigation to incriminate him at his trial. The court declined to make

an award for Mr Saunders's go curriary loss pursuant to article 50 of the Convention, noting that it could not speculate on question whether the outcome of the trial would have been at different had use not been made of the DTI material by the prosecution, and its finding of a breach of article 6 was not the be taken to suggest this. Buttle court awarded him £75,000 to cover his costs and expenses the Strasbourg proceedings

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Lesson one: change the culture of learning

on't be too clever, and if you are clever, for goodness' sake don't tell anyone; such is the antiaspiration, anti-education ethos that ment to do anything about it, must take still runs deep in the national psyche. Even Kipling agrees: "Don't look too good, nor talk too wise," run the words of advice for the perfect young Brit in the nation's favourite poem. That insidious culture - not teachers, not teaching methods, not the curriculum, nor the structure of school funding - is the biggest obstacle to solving British underachievement in education. So, when Tony Blair talks about changing attitudes towards learning, and about making education a national priority,

was one of the great pioneers of television partialism, a man we agree: something has be done. of high standards, courage, and human warmth Moreover, although policies on homework and parental contracts sound lightweight in the face of Creoffies Car Britain's substantial education deficit, Kenn in Anthony Course page these are exactly the kinds of proposnain the earling execute als which could strike at the heart of From Lorde is February 1932 this cultural problem. Our difficulties Primed Para Mache Ideneses three some time day there ded Chellenham a Languer 190 have been rehearsed time and time again. The bright, sparky élite who glitter their way into the top universities do very nicely out of the education system, thank you. But the people in the middle, especially the lower middle, and certainly at the bottom, could do much, much better. Travel across the

The hostility towards hard learning among huge swathes of the population, and the unwillingness of the establisha considerable amount of the blame for this state of affairs. You hear it in every playground. The boys are the worst. Enjoying a maths lesson is distinctly uncool. Practising French verbs could get you lynched on the way home. Clever children, hard-working children, have to dissemble in order to assimilate. It's OK to be streetwise, but boffins are out, and swots are even worse.

Nor is this merely the counterculture of feckless teenage rebels. Plenty of students take a similar approach: effortless superiority is fine, but only squares get down to the hard graft. Parents would rather see their sons out playing football or chasing girls than stuck in a corner with a book. And our national heroes are the Bransons who make a packet out of sheer pizzazz (a grown-up version of being streetwise) rather than training the brain. So education, for too many families, remains something that happens in schools, behind closed gates. The older generations are oblivious to it (either baffled or indifferent), the young see it as something to rebel against.

Of course plenty of parents do prize education, and do understand the importance of family encouragement and learning in the home; their kids get a great head-start. Those parents who

ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435 / 0171-345 2435

were well educated themselves, for whom qualifications proved the spring-board to prosperity, can and do provide their children with particular educational advantages. They know how to work the system, they are happy bouncing into schools to chat with teachers about the best help they can give young Jack and Sophie at home, and, if rich enough, they can even pay for the private schools that drown their pupils in homework each night.

For too long the politicians, the civil servants and the educational establishment (all education-worshipping parents themselves) have allowed this

dichotomy to persist. The daughters and sons of keen parents, instilled with enthusiasm (or at least respect) for learning and helped with homework from an early age, stand a good chance of doing well. The children whose parents do not encourage them to learn may still become academic achievers, but they will have to work much harder at it.

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In the circumstances, then, homeschool contracts which outline what schools expect from parents make an awful lot of sense. Drawing all parents into the education system can only be a good thing. To tell mums and dads

how they can be supportive at home is not hectoring; it is merely enabling them to give their children the help and advantages that other parents already provide. At the same time, ensuring that schools give all children homework is a good first step towards taking learning into every home. Children can enjoy a bit of education free from destructive classroom peer pressure. The bright ones can get a bit of extra stimulation, the struggling ones the opportunity to fill in the gaps. Blurring the absurd and artificial distinction between school-where-you-learn and home-where-you-play is extremely important.

Of course, a bit more homework and a universal contract will not solve every educational ill. Homework is of limited use if it is simply an extra half-hour of bad education. British workers already endure long hours just for the sake of it, compared with our Continental colleagues. Extending the macho culture of presenteeism back towards the nursery won't help anyone at all. Meanwhile, contracts that lecture and patronise, and apply sanctions to the poor children whose parents will not play ball, would be counter-productive as well as horribly illiberal. Any new policy has to take account of the fact that for some children, home will never be a comfortable environment in which to learn or work.

If Labour's policies are to work, the

legislation must not be too prescriptive. The role of government is to set the framework which best encourages schools and families to work together to improve Britain's education, rather than dictating from on high the details about hours and obligations for every child. But perhaps more important, governments can take the lead, shaping climates and changing aspirations. Even just to set the nation talking about education, its value and its importance, is a step in the right direction.

Bland soaps and a bit of a lather

Bruce Gyngell, managing director of Yorkshire Tyne Tees Television, is a bit of an evangelist for programmes with less sex. Now his station is putting its money where his mouth is by producing Quayside, a new soap opera billed as colourful, lively and sex-free. It will avoid "issues" and concentrate on wholesome people. Good luck to him. Few television entrepreneurs have come to grief by over-estimating the public's appetite for spice, but they may respond differently in Middlesbrough and Whitley Bay. Still - choose puritanism and sexlessness by all means, so long as you don't crimp the choice of those who like their soaps salacious.

- LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -

Breath-test figures may be dropped

sea, or even just across Hadrian's Wall,

and you find those average achievers

are far better qualified, and more

attractive to prospective employers.

Sir. I take issue with your efforts to discredit the Christmas drink/drive campaign ("Christmas rise in drink-driving revealed as bogus", 13 January).

The statistics announced by me on 2 January, on behalf of all 43 chief constables in England and Wales, indicated an 18 per cent increase over last year in positive breath tests. I drew no inference from this result, other than to say

that I was disappointed. Drawing conclusions from the drink/drive statistics has always been a contentious area. Prior to 1995 we did provide information on the number of tests

administered but, as there was no record of the number of motorists actually stopped, comparing the percentage of positive tests against this figure as a measure of success was fundamentally flawed. This presented a misleading picture and we have no wish to return to a situation where data is more a measure of police activity than the extent of drink-driving. In 1995 we shifted our emphasis

to reporting the total number of drink-related accidents but continued to record the number of positive tests because we recognised that the media would wish to make a comparison with previous campaigns and we were trying to be helpful. However, the reaction to the statistics provided this year may well lead us to reappraise the information we provide and possibly lead us to stop publishing the number of positive tests altogether, perhaps only publishing the number of alcoholrelated accidents and adding other categories.

I readily acknowledge that there may have been an increase in breath tests over the Christmas period and have never said otherwise. Any increase could well be due to our policy of breathtesting all drivers in all accidents that we deal with. This Christmas campaign was the first to be affected by this policy. Any increase may also have been due to an increase in police activity as indicated by your survey.

To say that my announcement was "bogus" and made in an effort to obtain greater powers is a clear distortion of the facts. The Association of Chief Police Officers has nothing to gain from distorting the results of the campaign. Our position on drinking and driving has been publicly and ethically stated for many years and is well known to the Department of Transport. Reducing the limit is for us a secondary issue and we have concentrated upon introducing the policy of breath-testing after all accidents and seeking unfettered discretion to breath-test, which will enable us to target the hard-core drink/driving offenders.

Articles such as this draw attention away from the real issue, the cost to society in terms of lost lives, injuries and the misery caused by bereavement, not only at Christmas but the whole year round. As far as the police service is concerned, our priorities will lie not in data-gathering but in actively pursuing offenders. PAUL MANNING Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police: Secretary, Council of the Association



'Lost souls' join road protests

Sir. In a report on the violence at the Newbury bypass protest (13 January), Jojo Moyes asserts that much of the publicity surrounding the "battle" at Newbury was due to the "high-profile" support of people like myself. To set the record straight. I have never been actively involved in any protests at Newbury. I was, however, deeply involved with the protests against the Swainswick/Batheaston bypass in 1994, and am sympathetic to the

aims of the Newbury protesters. To address the point, I do not believe that high-profile support by people like myself and the Marchioness of Worcester has "sanitised" road protest in the eyes of Middle England. Here in Bath (as indeed at Newbury) local opposition to the bypass was always broad-church, long before any publicity. The huge numbers of people, of all ages and social groups, who refuse to stand by and witness the destruction of the countryside are not so timid that they need to be led into action by so-called celebrities. There is a tremendous amount of frustration out there at a system which. favouring the road lobby and big business, calls a biased system of

public inquiries 'democracy'. However, there is a downside to the breadth of any road protest. Among the students, teachers, civil servants, artists, business people, housewives, committed and fulltime environmental campaigners, and all the others who joined the protests in Bath, were hapless protests in Dath, were haptess young people who represented the Government's policy of "care in the community", drifting

alcoholics and drug addicts. travelling toughies, squatters and others who formed a disturbing mini-community of lost souls. There were one or two whose aim was to stir up violence, but they were restrained by more responsible protesters. BEL MOONEY Bath, Somerset

Sir; I was at Newbury on Saturday. The fences were not "stormed" by the protesters (report, 13 January). We went to the fence to hang Christmas decorations, and the sheer number of us made it impossible for the police to prevent fence bolts from being undone. My impression was that they didn't try. The security guards did however move in to protect the main work site (quite sensible; it is a dangerous area). They left a digger unprotected, almost asking for trouble.

The site was peacefully occupied for about an hour before there was any real trouble. A highlight for me was when a couple of hundred of us joined hands around Middle Oak and did the hokey cokey.

If the green movement needs leadership, its priority should be to organise such demonstrations so that violence does not occur. It would have helped matters if someone respected within the movement had called for a peaceful withdrawal at about four o'clock. It is an irony that the Criminal Justice Act makes such a level of organisation potentially a criminal act. RICHARD MANN Oxford Friends of the Earth

The trouble with **Internet shopping**

Sir: The major snag in electronic retailing or mail-order purchasing (letter, 10 January) is that someone has to be at home to take delivery

of the goods.

Delivery times given are often imprecise, making it impractical for those who work or have to pick up children from school or have better things to do. If the goods delivered are faulty, the customer has to waste time again.

There is a fortune waiting for someone who could circumvent this problem, perhaps with a series of local pick-up points. After a brief and frustrating attempt at mail-order shopping, I will not be scanning the Internet for my grocery bargains unless I can avoid having to spend all morning at home two or three times a week. GILLIAN DAVIDSON London SE24

Council power

Sir: In your report relating to the petition to the Privy Council ("Campaigner plans to smoke out party's tobacco lobby funding", 10 January), you quote constitutional Labour government. expert Vernon Bogdanor of Brasenose College, Oxford as saying that a petition to the Privy Council is a waste of time since it is

'purely a formal body". This will come as a surprise to the Privy Council, which has statutory powers enabling the

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E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

| Judicial Committee to consider any | litre of petrol/diesel and 7p per matter referred to it by the Queen | packet of 20 cigarettes; and in Council. In recent times Privy Council inquiries have been held into the legal basis of phonetapping and events leading up to the Falklands war.

packet of 20 cigarettes; and (b) the phased abolition, between

1998 and 2001, of the income tax

relief on profit-related pay

million employees.

currently enjoyed by some four

The above tax increases are

projections for tax revenue; according to the November 1996

Budget Red Book, their effect will

equivalent of 3p on the basic rate of

income tax between the current tax

year 1996/97 and tax year 1999/2000.

Labour will at some stage be

reverse the above increases or to

confirm that overall personal tax

asked whether they intend to

will rise under Labour.

Chantrey Vellacott Chartered

Makes you weep

Sir: Has anyone else noticed the

resemblance between the long-

the Great Ormond Street

"tear-drop" campaign by the

running "tear-drop" campaign by

Children's Hospital Fund and the

I assume the child in the Great

Ormond Street logo is shedding a

blue tear in recognition of the

unnecessary pain and suffering

Conservative policies. The only

recognition the Conservatives

appear to be giving the Great

their logo.
ANDREW SLEGGETT

London NW1

endured by sick children as a result

of ineffectual, damaging, and costly

Ormond Street campaign is to steal

M C FTTZPATRICK

Head of Economics

London WC1

Conservatives?

already built into the Treasury

be to increase taxes by the

The Judicial Committee was created by Section 4 of the Judicial Committee Act of 1833. Section 21 of the same Act expressly preserves intact the Privy Council's other powers, including what is known as the Royal Prerogative. Thus the right of a subject with a grievance to seek redress by petitioning the Queen in Council has never been abolished.

The "Queen in Council" effectively means the government of the day. The Tories may not want an inquiry into the cash-forchildren's-lungs issue, but what about an incoming Labour government? ANTHONY SAMUELSON London N20

Labour tax poser

Sir: You report (9 January) Tony Blair's statement that Labour will have no need to increase personal tax to carry out its programme. Most people would take this as a commitment that, overall, personal taxes will not increase under a

However, Ken Clarke's 1993 and 1996 Budgets have instituted a "rolling programme" of personal tax increases over the next few vears, most notably: (a) annual increases, over and

above inflation, of (broadly) 2p per

this my present time spent on

election agenda", 13 January). I already attend school for seven hours a day, five days a week - 35 hours at school each week. Add to homework – about an hour per day – and I already work 40 hours a week. If I have to work an extra half an hour per night, that will be forty-two-and-a-half hours. That is more than an average working adult.

I have always felt that I and other

Homework: last

straw for pupils

Sir: I am appalled by the Labour

times ("Schools head Blair's

Party's proposal about homework

secondary school children (answering all those questions for the teachers) should get paid for our labour at school and home. However, I never complain, I jus sit and persevere. But now, I have been pushed over the edge. It is time to negotiate a pay settlement at least £2,000 per annum. Terms are negotiable. My times are limited, but I could manage a working packed lunch. JONATHAN DALTON (aged 14) Datchet, Berkshire

Sir: Tony Blair wishes to see a halfhour of compulsory homework for primary-aged children. For a class of 30 this represents 15 hours of homework that has to be set and marked by the class teacher each day. Secondary schools have long since recognised the demands of marking and homework preparation on non-contact time away from the classroom. When does he suggest primary school teachers find the time to do this? PETER COLEMAN

Goodrich Primary School London SE22

The blind kept waiting

Sir: On 12 January 1995 the Department of the Environment published a consultation paper proposing to extend Part M of the building regulations covering the provision of new residential dwellings. This proposed extension would compel housebuilders to incorporate disabled access features in all new-build

The Royal National Institute for the Blind welcomed the paper and made additional recommendations to ensure that such new-build housing should be accessible not just in terms of wheelchair users, but also for tenants with sensory disabilities, including blind and partially sighted people.

Two years have passed and there has been no indication from the DoE as to the timetable for this extension of part M. In the meantime, many disabled people, including those with a visual impairment, continue to live in inaccessible accommodation. IAN BRUCE Director General Royal National Institute for the Blind

Heated debate

London WI

Sir: The temperature given for Scarborough (weather reports, 9 January) was 24C. Was this a natural phenomenon, or was it due to the hot air wafting from the council chambers after the debate on whether to spend money on theatre or public conveniences? BARBARA PARKINSON

1950 entertainment Wood B

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O Bes

Labour's likely lad

From humble beginnings, John Prescott looks destined for high office in the next Labour government. Behind his public image lies a more complex character than his critics allow, says his biographer Colin Brown

elected Prime Minister, one of Tony Blair's first tasks on his first day in office will be to call his deputy, John Prescott. to 10 Downing Street to discuss his role in the Labour government.
The outcome of those nego-

tiations with his difficult, belligerent, big-hearted deputy could determine the success or failure of a Blair government and both Blair and Prescott are aware of it.

Prescott has always had the capacity to withdraw from the "Blair project" if he believed it was going too far in the modernisation of the Labour Party. He has complained about the pace of change but he has not objected to the principle of change.

Prescott's critics on the left of the party who believe he has given away too much, and in the Conservative Party who see him as a political dinosaur, misunderstand the man, and have fallen for the easy stereotype.

The Prescott the public sees is the bluff Northerner, blunt as a fist, a chip on both shoulders. with vowels as flat as a cap, bruising for a fight. There is no doubt that Prescott is tough. As a boy at sea he had to be - life as a young organiser in the seamen's union in Liverpool was no place for the faint-hearted. His father, Bert, told me that young John learnt how to box But it is also because they with his capacity for intellectual

n the event of being to protect himself against intimidation.

> I had access to Prescott's papers, his family and his friends, although my book is an unauthorised biography. They are an amazingly loyal bunch. Former seafaring friends, the Cunard stewards with whom he used to serve coffee to the blue-rinse ladies on their trips to America, would not speak to me without first checking with "Johnny" to make sure it was all right. Even then, they were guarded about what they would say about the antics of young Lothario from Chester who bore a striking resemblance to Marlon Brando in On the Waterfront when he was a

They still keep in touch with the deputy leader of the Labour Party, 30 years after he left the ships, and in December they held their annual reunion. He has tracked down a shipowners' model of their old ship, the Britannic, which they are hoping to install in a maritime the same with his friends at the Commons. They have formed a screen around him, which could be opened only with his

What is it in Prescott that inspires such loyalty? It is partly, no doubt, that they wish to avoid his bark, either down the telephone or in person.

know the vulnerable, private ide of Prescott.

His second son, David, a journalist, who looks remarkably like his father when he was in his twenties, says Prescott can speak to a crowd of 3,000 supporters without flinching. In fact, he enjoys the experience — but he will not ring up a restaurant to book a table. Prescott says he fears rejection. Thousands of children like

Prescott failed their 11-plus but none has been quite so scarred by the experience. He has frequently told the story of the girl who sent back a loveletter when he had failed the exam, with the spelling errors corrected. Nothing could have been quite so crushing as that rejection. I tried to find her, but he is keeping her identity secret. His brother Ray can't remember her. Ray went on to grammar school, while John went to a secondary school at

His mother, Phyllis, a lifelong Labour supporter, says ingly shy at school. Part of the problem was his syntax, or lack of it. Some have suggested it might be a form of verbal

Ellesmere Port.

His closest trade union friend, Rodney Bickerstaffe, believes his mind races ahead, jumping from one thought to another. There is little wrong







thought. He regards himself as one of the original modernisers, who was having fresh ideas before the Blairites were out of short trousers.

Pauline, his wife, says he is the HG Wells of the modern Labour Party. The refusal of the "intellectuals" to recognise modernisation of the party is a continuing source of his frus-tration, which causes his occasional outbursts in the press. My starting point for writing

the biography was rooted in the late Eighties, when I discovered that Prescott was quietly pushing forward a change of policy that would allow British Rail to raise private finance for investment in rolling stock and track. To Prescott, it seemed a logical solution to a problem of Treasury stringency, but breaking down the Treasury orthodoxy

John Major was tentatively pushing at the same policy, and now claims parentage for the Private Finance Initiative, but it was Prescott's idea. Similarly, Prescott came to the conclusion at the same time as Blair that accepting the Social Chapter would also mean an end to the closed shop - giving people rights also meant they had a right not to join a trade union.

His experiences at sea convinced him of the need for prestrike ballots long before they were endorsed by Blair. He cut his teeth addressing pier-head mass meetings of strikers in the Sixties, which were open to intimidation. Such meetings also taught him that it was vital were to act as a leader. It was the reason why, years later,

when he fell out with Neil Kinnock over his own autocratic style of leadership, he told the Labour leader: "Courage is not enough - you have to bring the Tis readiness to think

unconventionally caused some surprises for his tutors at Hull University where, as a mature student in the mid-Sixties, he took an economics degree. His tutors found he was quite prepared to throw in a bit of poetry with his work on the theory of inflation, and he once bumped into Philip Larkin in the street. He asked whether he could attend one of Larkin's poetry seminars, but Larkin looked down his nose at Prescott and walked on.

Researching the book, it came as a shock to the spin-doctored system to see a BBC video of the 1982 party conference when

with his family) had a tough time as a voung organiser. **But his bluff** image hides a more thoughtful

Facing the

future: the

young

Prescott

(above, at

the front,

side photographs: Benn, Scargill and Kinnock

Jobs, Freedom" speakers wearing CND badges and woolly sweaters engaged in uncomradely points of order with the "comrade chair", Judith Hart. looking, with comrade Healey scoring points off comrade Scargill Viewers were made to feel like voyeurs, not voters. It was a reminder of how far Blair has broken down the class war

barricades and opened the

then a bairy education

spokesman - were in the ascen-

dancy. Under a slogan "Peace,

Labour Party to ordinary people more concerned with mortgages and good schools than passing resolutions at party meetings. It casts an interesting sidelight to the relationship between Blair and Prescott to discover that when they stood on the platform together on 21 July 1994 as leader and deputy leader, their wives had never met before. They come from different generations, and different backgrounds, and the

London dinner party scene. Prescott had felt at ease with John Smith's leadership and Smith's sudden death was a terrible personal blow. Prescott had delivered his now-famous speech in support of Smith at

Prescotts are not part of the

the party conference in Brighton in 1993 during a debate on "One Member One Vote" democracy in the party. Smith had privately threatened to resign if he had lost. Friends said Prescott never felt patronised by Smith, and they understood each other. That was all changed when Smith died of a heart attack in May 1994. Blair's determination to

press ahead with rewriting Clause IV of the party's constitution could have caused the first real crisis in their alliance. Prescott was against the reform, but he was won round, and when he was persuaded of its virtues, he became a crucial factor in selling it to the party. His disagreements with Blair since then have not been about the direction in which he is taking the party, but about the pace of change. Prescott's loy-alty was strained to breaking point in early 1995 when he was kept out of the "magic circle" for an important strategy meeting. Since then, he has insisted

on being kept informed. Prescott is a great conspiracy theorist. A picture on his livingroom wall reminds him of how cruei the diotters can be. It is a print of the official painting of the House of Commons. when Thatcher was Prime Minister and Kinnock leader of the Opposition. It was done from photograph, taken when Prescott was sitting on the front bench. In the painting he appears on the second row, on the so-called "loyalty bench", demoted, he is sure, on the orders of someone in the leader's office.

Above all, Prescott has been keen to show Blair that his loyalty is absolute, once it has been earned. I had assumed that Prescott's hero would be Nye Bevan, the Welsh left-wing firebrand. But reading modern political history at Ruskin College, Oxford, Prescott adopted Ernie Bevin as his hero. The working-class Labour MP who rose to become foreign secretary in the great reforming 1945 Attlee government was Prescott's perfect role model. Prescott sees himself in the role of Bevin to Blair's Attlee. providing sage advice and indefatigable support, when neces-sary. There is no question in Prescott's mind that Blair has achieved great things for the Labour Party, but he would prefer it if the engine driver would listen to the voice from the guard's van a little more.

bout 12 months ago, Blair warned the Shadow Cabinet that unless they were united, they would risk losing the election. Prescon heeded the warning. His last public remonstrance was last August, when Prescott said in an interview with me for The Independent that he thought the election should be fought on substance, not style.

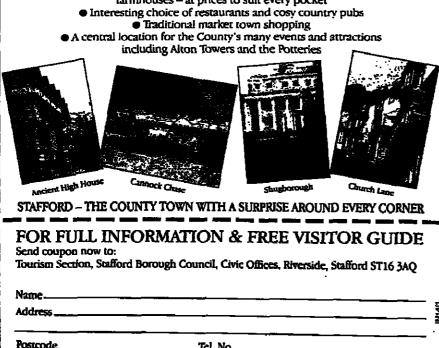
Since then, Prescott has been keeping loyally to the task of seeing Labour elected. He is not about to explode, like some long-extinct volcano, or lead a peasants' revolt once the election is safely won. He will not play George Brown to Tony Blair's Harold Wilson, but there are some sticking points to his loyalty. He would not allow Labour's links with out a fight, and he is wary of those who have floated the idea of a coalition with the Liberal Democrats as a bastion against Labour's own left wing in government.
There is continuing doubt

about Prescott's likely role in government. Blair ducked the question again on the BBC Breakfast with Frost show at the weekend. There is talk about Prescott being made Home Secretary; it is one of the high offices of state, and it would keep him out of Gordon Brown's hair.

If Labour does win, and Prescott gets the call to Number 10, he may ask to be made First Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister, like Michael Heseltine. In my view, he has

'Fighting Talk'. Colin Brown's biography of John Prescott, will be published by Simon and Schuster on 3 February (£15.99).

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♠ OR PHONE 01785 214669 TODAY

Thrills and spills in the BBC radio car

Testerday we started our new interactive novel "A Man For Today" in which you, the reader, are Jeremy Plinth, Junior Minister for Arms Sales at the Foreign Office. Very early one morning you are tricked into agreeing to appear on the Radio 4 "Today" programme, even though you would much

rather stay in bed. At 6.30 a BBC radio car turns up to collect you ... Don't forget that YOU are Jeremy Plinth! And at every juncture, YOU have to choose the right option before you can continue the story! Right, here we go! "Mr Plinth, sir?" says the

uniformed chauffeur of the BBC radio car, as you sleepily walk down your tiny Chelsea garden path. "That's right," you say.

"You're taking me to Broadcasting House, presumably. "Not exactly, sir. We'll be doing the interview here in

the radio car. That saves you going all the way to W1." You are about to get in the back of the car when it suddenly occurs to you that it might be more egalitarian to get in the front beside the driver. You are about to get

in the front when it suddenly occurs to you that he might find this a bit self-consciously matey and over-familiar. You are about to get in the back when the chauffeur solves the problem for you by saying: a) "For God's sake stop dithering and get in the

b) "You can sit in the front if you like, but I must warn you I'm a Spurs supporter, so you can imagine how cheerful I am right now as company.

 c) "Do you want to drive while I sit in the back and read the paper?"
d) "If you sit in the back,

sir, I'll take the wheel and drive until we're ready." Yes, of course - the chauffeur politely puts you in the back and takes the wheel, and off you go through early morning Chelsea. You don't often see London this early, so you look around with keen interest at all these people going off to work.

You don't look with very

keen interest at all those homeless people sleeping rough, because as a rising politician you can't afford to let yourself get bogged down by sentimentality, and shoes on the wrong feet.



Miles Kington

besides, none of these people has got a vote probably, so they aren't very important for the next election.

Dawn is beginning to break as you head north past Hyde Park, and then something very strange strikes you. Yes, even a rising politician has a few brain cells left, enough to alert you to the fact that something is wrong. But what is this odd thing that is setting off all the alarm bells in your sleepy

a) You have got your

b) When you said goodbye to your sleeping wife, she said, "Goodbye, Charlie," which isn't your name.

c) You forgot to ask the Today programme how much you were getting paid for this.

d) If the interview is being done in the BBC radio car, why is the man driving you somewhere else?

Yes, why are you being driven somewhere? Surely the whole point of the radio car is so that it can be done on the spot, ie outside your Chelsea address! So you bang on the glass and the driver says, "Yes, sir?" And you say: "Look,

where are we going? Why can't we park outside my house and do it?"

"Not very good reception," says the driver. "Too low in Chelsea. We have to find somewhere where we can send a good signal, so I'm heading for Notting Hill."

Of course! Simple when you think of it! So you nod off to sleep for a while, but when you wake up you realise you are going through Swiss Cottage, which is way to the north of Notting Hill and you panic, and start

bashing on the glass again, but you suddenly realise that he has closed and locked it. and you are a prisoner! The driver refuses to look round. You try to get out of the car at some red lights but the doors are locked.

What on earth is going on here? a) The chauffeur has

forgotten he has got you in the back, and is absent mindedly heading home for breakfast. b) The Today programme has got Malcolm Rifkind to do the interview instead of

you, and is too embarrassed to tell you.
c) Your wife has discovered that you are two-timing her with a mistress in Fulham and

has paid for a contract killer to dispose of you.
d) The Labour Party reckons that if it kidnaps no

more than three Tory MPs, of whom you are one, it can win the vital vote of confidence in the House

Yes, the truth of the matter is that ... I'm sorry. We seem to have run out of space. More of this some other time,

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If Labour bekanner Serretary.

Bullet he replaced t be produced as a second Just My Blair - blech partial at this rage of the game hinal clothers arithmetic Bint pour et situatio have a Buccost in Bul cores an ir doctil even seed a Cabi shead of the Civil Service Maccon with us demus will inherit from the There were stories over t We effect that Lichertt was he post. The fact is that it school the fact is that is should be septentially and entire the control of the fact of the control of the fact of head of the Chil Service. Robin, if Mr Blair picked Ris a Defence. Il could be prese theningracy in action.

There are at least four or openpic who would do to settlery job well enough. Be feel out its construction of the feel out its construction of the Winking overview of the Winking out in advance which and imagination Labour min in with is important for the saiting house the saiting has in the saiting has a saiting has in the saiting has a saitin h-waiting but it is far less ing a strategy linking political possibility and administrative what Labour seems to lace thing confidence. The kinc manily dismissed Sir Ian Bar marily dismissed Sir Ian Ban Civil Service. As confident at the lone-mark that the lone-mark

the long-range think tank, promoted a committed more Saff (CPRS). As confident a Review Staff (CPRS). As confident a committed more safe for the staff there). Safe for Labour's preparing Whitehall, is marginal of Number 10. of Number 10 and the Cabing in Mr Blair's pendi

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Y 1997 . THE INDEPENDED +

On education, Blair means business

ne of the fastest-forgot-ten films of 1996 was Dangerous Minds, a gripping Michelle Pfeiffer vehicle in which the star improbably played an ex-marine who starts teaching impossible kids at a high school in-say-South Cen-tral Los Angeles. Sheer Hollywood schmalz, of course, and it was more or less dismissed by the posher critics.

Yet it was about something which isn't tackled enough in Anglo-Saxon popular culture: how, if you have no other advantages, being engaged by a good teacher is the one you need most; and about how what happens in school, sometimes even more than what happens at home, is what makes the difference between hope and hopelessness, between rising above the ghetto or being dragged down by it. If nothing else, it preached the absolute centrality of education to social progress.
Which is just what Tony Blair

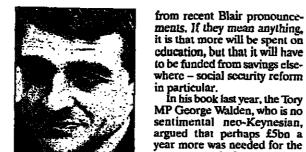
was doing on TV's Breakfast With Frost at the weekend. Recent history is littered with the broken hopes of politi-cians who promised that education would be their big idea. So Blair went a stage further by saying, in effect, that improvement of Britain's education system would be for him what trade union reform was for Margaret Thatcher. Which is

an interesting comparison for two reasons. First, because while Mrs Thatcher was committed to changes in industrial relations in her 1979 manifesto she was distinctly reticent before she became Prime Minister about what turned out to be the dramatically specific ways in which she would do it. And secondly because it invites the immediate gibe that perhaps Blair thinks that he can transform British education, as Margaret Thatcher transformed union legislation, for free.

On the face of it, there is no shortage of ammunition for this charge - which a range of critics, for example in the teaching unions and the Liberal Democrats, have already started to level. David Blunkett has bravely sketched out the savings for higher education that comprehensive student loans will provide. But Labour has still made only a single, very modest, comin primary school classes from the money saved transforming the inner-city schools which the by scrapping the private sector Assisted Places rich and lucky at present ignore for their own Scheme. Yet there aren't many serious people children, will mean a more prosperous, more in any party who don't think the state educa- competitive, more civilised, less crime-ridden,

In the real world, for example, as opposed sign of being serious about doing.

The rise and rise of David Blunkett, unmisto the one conjured by Hollywood, a lot of tough, able, and potentially dedicated people need more than ideals to turn their lives upside down by giving 100 per cent commitment as teachers in sink schools. They need public appreciation. Even more, they need a decent salary. But Blair doesn't believe in raising taxes, even to pay for better education. So does he think that mere preaching is enough? No, as it happens. There is a clear sub-text emerging perhaps?



Donald Macintyre

Improving schools must be funded by savings

elsewhere – social

security in particular

quite a lot of voters think that this means a total of 1p a week extra in tax, or something even more painless. No, the real problem is that there is a crossparty taboo on talking about many of the potential savings before the election. But it now looks as if not only reducing the "costs and burdens of long-term unemployment" as Labour's document put it last week, but maybe, just maybe, the ending, à la Walden, of some cherished middle-class perks could help to fund an improved state education system.

state system, including universal nursery provision. He sug-

gested savings to pay for it, for example taxing child benefit, putting VAT on books and

newspapers and scrapping mortgage interest tax relief -

which would raise £3bn and

could be presented as an eco-

nomically sensible move to pre-

vent another house price boom.

may not be Blair's. But the

wider principle surely is. This is dangerous territory -

though perhaps no more so than the Liberal Democrats'

apparently brave attachment

to increasing income tax — "if necessary" — to pay for more education spending. A small prize for anyone who hears

Paddy Ashdown saying clearly

that this means an increase of

lp in the pound rather than

using his favoured formula of

a "penny on income tax".

There is some convincing

research which shows that

Walden's targeted savings

And that in turn may mean widening the constituency which feels it has a stake in better public education. Ideally that would mean, as Walden also suggested, dismantling the apartheid between private and public sectors and by luring some of the best independent schools back into the state system. It also means convincing those who are doing nicely by private education, or by state grammar ols, or the best comprehensives, that tion system needs a lot more money than that. less divided society. And this Blair shows every

> takeably now an education moderniser, is further evidence that these were more than warm words from Blair at the weekend. That doesn't, of course, mean that he and Blunkett could not do with some help. Step forward a film-maker to excite Britain about public education as Dangerous Minds failed, in the end, to excite America. The Ridings by Mike Leigh,

A whale of a lie behind a fishy tale

by Ann Treneman



Keiko joins in a staff meeting at the aquarium where his future is under discussion

احكدا من الاعل

whales in captivity. Caught off moving Keiko to Oregon. Not leeland in 1979 when he was only was he going to a bigger. two, Keiko spent time at Marineland in Ontario before

he Hollywood star was in the pool when

I arrived, and he had

the kind of schedule

most of us only

dream about. First came a rub-

down, then a session with his

personal trainer, followed by a

light lunch. There is squid,

herring, sardines and smelt, all

top quality," explained the publicist. "You could do worse

than live on his diet. He eats about 200 pounds a day."

No, it is not the most expensive bouillabaisse on America's

West Coast, but a freezerful of

fish for Keiko, the killer whale

who leapt to fame as the star of

the Free Willy films. It has been

a year since Keiko came to this

pool - a custom-built \$7.3m

tank at the Oregon Coast

Aquarium - and it is not only

his appetite that now seems

larger than life. Keiko has four

keeping him here costs half a

Even by Tinseltown stan-

are paid by donations and that

is a lot of charity for one whale.

There is something fishy here,

and that has to do with Holly-

wood, damage control and our

love of happy endings. Not long ago Keiko was just

another amusement park

attraction jumping through hoops for his dinner. In this he

million dollars a year.

being sold to Reino Aventura in Mexico City. It was here that Warner Brothers filmed him for its story about a whale helped to freedom by a boy after being threatened by unscrupulous amusement park owners.

Free Willy was a surprise hit, only was he going to a bigger, better and colder pool, but he was also to be prepared for freedom - just like Willy. "The goal of the project has always been release but there are big obstacles," says an Oregon Aquarium spokeswoman. "It has never been done before and is not healthy enough, and he's "We are here for his sake. as we watch a documentary What we do is entirely based on showing killer whales ambushrehabilitation. This has never been done before," says mam-

mologist Nolan Harvey. Keiko has responded well to the regime - gaining 1,000lb to his current 9,000 and looking much healthier - but he has a long way to go before he swims free. So do we. There is much we do not know about killer whales

ing seal pups. Keiko leaves the observation window; if you've never seen a live fish, it is going to be some time before you are lunching on seal pup.
As well as becoming a killer,

to be freed Keiko would have to be disease-free and fit enough to swim up to 100 miles a day. None of this dampens the media's enthusiasm for a feel-good story. "I'm on the West Coast of America with a Hollywood star who is preparing for a new free life," began an ITV report last week.

Nathan Labudde, of the Free Willy-Keiko Foundation in San Francisco, is almost evangelical about it all: "People are astonished that we are tackling this against such incredible odds. But we heard the same rhetoric pool in Mexico. Nobody believed we could do it, and we

In the movie Willy leaps to is a pro-whaling nation and the ing. In his pool, Keiko is rich

Free Willy? It could go badly wrong. Not for nothing is the sea called cruel

making \$150m worldwide and too dependent on people." spawning a sequel, with another currently in production. But it also landed Warner staff devoted to his care, and Brothers with a public relations nightmare when it was revealed mologist. Mark Trimm. "We that the star himself was living call him a one-in-a-million in a pool that was too small and dards that is not cheap. His bills too warm. He may have been the best-loved killer whale in Latin America - well, he was the only one - but he was also the most unhealthy, with a he is busy with aerobics, socialdrooping dorsal fin and a skin

equivalent of herpes. By the time the sequel had premièred, the damage was vation window, bates nature almost completely in control, was like the other 50 killer with plans well advanced for movies such as Lethal Weapon.)

This is an understatement. they sleep - and we are partic-Keiko loves people, and they love him. "We are his family." ularly ignorant about the pods in Icelandic waters. If Keiko is We are his pod," says a mamwhale because he does not have the hormonal mood swings you normally see." Perhaps Keiko just does not have the time to be grumpy: from 7am to 10pm isation and play. After then one condition that is the whale of his humans may drop by to see a movie with him. (Keiko,

who watches through his obser-

programmes and loves action

freed he needs to be returned to his original pod. This could be identified only by dialect - did. People need to believe in each pod has a distinct one but matching Keiko's is difficult as he "speaks" a rather odd freedom and is soon cavorting patois that includes dolphin on the high seas to a Michael noises (they lived with him in Mexico) and a whistle like a dom has its drawbacks. Iceland Mexican fire engine. is a pro-whaling nation and the Over the years Keiko has sea isn't called cruel for nothlearned scores of "behaviours"

- for instance, when and how

but none so far involve anything as basic as killing. "They are the apex predator; nothing hunts a free Keiko could be the killer whale," says Mark Trimm, biggest whopper of them all.

Babes in the Whitehall wood

If Labour is to wield power, it must learn to deal with the mandarins, says David Walker

ir Robin Butler, Whitehall's head prefect and Cabinet Secretary, turns 60, retirement age, one year from now, in January 1998. If he is going to be replaced, the button needs to be pushed as soon as this June - mere weeks after Tony Blair's likely arrival at 10 Downing Street. By this stage in the game, however uncertain the final electoral arithmetic, a Labour Party hun-

gry for power should have decided on the But-ler succession. But does an incoming Labour government even need a Cabinet Secretary who is also head of the Civil Service like Sir Robin? Only if it accepts without demur the Whitehall structure it will inherit from the Conservatives. There were stories over the Christmas recess

to the effect that Labour wants "an outsider" for the post. The fact is that it does not take much networking to see that only a limited number of people in Whitehall and even fewer outsiders not trust his Chancellor, Gordon Brown, as Mrs have enough experience and clout to become either or both Cabinet Secretary or professional head of the Civil Service. Sir Richard Wilson, now at the Home Office, would be a clone of Sir Robin. If Mr Blair picked Richard Mottram, now at Defence, it could be presented as state-school meritocracy in action.

There are at least four or five of Whitehall's top people who would do the existing Cabinet Secretary job well enough. But their identity matters far less than evidence that Labour has carried out its overview of the machinery of state. Working out in advance which officials of energy and imagination Labour ministers would be comfortable with is important for the governmentin-waiting, but it is far less vital than developing a strategy linking political objectives, political possibility and administrative means.

What Labour seems to lack still, oddly, is governing confidence. The kind of confidence that Margaret Thatcher had in 1981 when she summarily dismissed Sir Ian Bancroft as head of the Civil Service. As confident as when she chopped the long-range think tank, the Central Policy Review Staff (CPRS). As confident as when she promoted a committed monetarist to head the

Treasury (he is still there). So far, Labour's preparations have been scant. Derek Foster, the shadow minister covering Whitehall, is marginal to this process. The ering whitenail is marginal to the relations at the Department for Education and Employof Number 10 and the Cabinet Office) are languishing in Mr Blair's pending tray.

Jonathan Powell, Mr Blair's chief of staff, has "had conversations"; he may even have talked to his brother, Charles, Lady Thatcher's Civil Service protégé at Number 10. He is said to see himself as head of a revamped "think tank". amalgamating the old CPRS and the Number 10

Some shadows have attended the odd Fabian or Institute of Public Policy Research seminar given by the Whitehall expert Peter Hennessy. But to date the most ordered statement of Labour's thinking about the Civil Service is a watery chapter in Peter Mandelson's and Roger Liddle's bathetic book The Blair Revolution.

Cynical men of the world lean back at this point and say, "committees and machinery, all that is for anoraks". What really matters, they say, are political personalities. If Mr Blair canno amount of machinery will bridge the political chasm at the heart of the administration. Splitting the Cabinet Secretary's job, beefing up the Cabinet Secretariat ... all that may be irrelevant, since Mr Blair, evidently, has no Michael Heseltine figure to head a central, progresschasing unit in the Cabinet Office. Neither John Prescott nor Robin Cook look quite right for the

But cynical men of the world are wrong if they don't see how self-defeating is an approach to power that has not worked out, in advance, how far the Civil Service has changed under the Tories and how it ought to change under Labour. Any government with the kind of heavy constitutional commitments that Labour has needs a governing strategy and, critically for ministers who have never tasted life surrounded by a private office cocoon, a realistic sense of what civil servants can and cannot do for a

Labour government. Since January of last year - under more generous rules agreed, to his credit, by John Major

- Labour shadows have had reasonably free diaries. Either that or they have been listening access to Whitehall. Some have been along to training courses arranged by academic and ex-Civil Service sympathisers at Templeton College in Oxford to acclimatise. Some (David Blunkett and Michael Bichard, the permanent secretary ment) have met and matched. But it has taken can corrupt Labour ingénues, so can the smooth some - Frank Dobson, notoriously - 11 months mandarins of Whitehall.



Sir Robin Butler, Cabinet Secretary: Labour should be thinking about his successor now

to get round to visiting the man who, if Mr Dobson succeeds to the Environment Secretary's post, will be his daily companion in the pathways of power.

It isn't enough. Just as generals are always fighting the war before last, so Labour shadows seem lost in some ancient perception of Whitetoo hard to Bernard Donoughue, head of Jim Callaghan's policy unit, and his memories of an obstructionist Civil Service. Folk memories on the left die hard: somewhere here is Ramsay MacDonald succumbing to Lady Londonderry's aristocratic embrace. And if the establishment

New Labourites of the Mandelson stamp think they are too sophisticated to fall into Sir Humphry's clutches. Mr Mandelson, having come to know Sir Robin reasonably well in recent years, thinks all Labour needs to do is give civil servants their marching orders. Just as the machine served the Tories, so it will serve Labour. The old verities about neutrality and objective advice still hold.

The trouble with this is that the old verities are not enough. Mrs Thatcher's handbagging has marked Whitehall, and not just in the sense that there are now executive agencies and contracts and a new management style. Labour will inherit a Civil Service that has lost its intellectual edge and - beneath that infinitely smooth surface - a lot of its self-confidence. And that may actually make things more difficult for a Labour government seeking to initiate radical

There are several areas where Labour will surely need first-rate advice, but will it be on offer. Of all Britain's post-war problems, the one that has never shown Whitehall at its best in terms of the quality of thought or imaginative advice is Europe. And, for all the seminars that the permanent secretaries have organised on the family and social dislocation, social policy is another area where Whitehall is weak, both in terms of inter-departmental co-ordination and new policy ideas.

Labour has at most four months before it takes power. There are two things it can still do before it inherits Whitehall. One is compiling lists. Before taking office, both Prime Minister and Shadow Cabinet colleagues ought to know enough of personnel and potential to identify, where appropriate, Whitehall's good women, French-speakers, Newcastle United supporters and so on.

But the names of civil servants matter less than the job they will be asked to do. What does Labour want Whitehall for? Does it expect hot, expert advice, or just professional implementation of pre-ordained policy? Those are not really administrative questions, they go to the heart of the Labour puzzle. Does Mr Blair want power in order to do, or power in order to be? Modern Whitehall is well fitted to give him the second. For the first, he would need to reform Whitehall far more radically than Mrs Thatcher

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business & city BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Brussels warns of legal action over BA alliance

Chris Godsmark **Business Correspondent**

A simmering row between the Government and the European Commission over the UK's moves to approve British Airways' proposed alliance with American Airlines exploded yesterday when it emerged that the EC has threatened Britain with legal action unless it imposes much stricter conditions

on the two carriers. The warning is likely to spark a jurisdictional confrontation between Britain and the EC over whether Commissioners have the power to impose stricter conditions on the two airlines than those proposed by the UK

The legal threat came in a letter from Karel Van Miert, Competition Commissioner, to Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, launching an attack on the report into the alliance by the Office of Fair Trading, the UK competition

watchdog.
The OFT has provisionally

Jill Treanor

Banking Correspondent

The City is more buoyant than

at any time since 1989, the

peak of the last boom, provid-

ing further evidence of a bo-

nanza last year among securities houses and other financial ser-

vices firms.
The Confederation of British

their valuable take-off and landing slots at Heathrow Airport, equivalent to 12 daily return flights, to avoid an investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

However, the conditions. which would still leave the alliance with some 3,000 slots at the airport, have been savaged by rival carriers as far too weak. Mr Van Miert made clear in

his letter, sent last Friday, that the

lan Lang: Has yet to receive

American should give up 168 of their valuable take-off and land- He said: "We do not consider that the imposition of conditions can compensate for the restrictions of competition which results from the agreement."

He also cast doubt on the whole basis of the discussions under way between the UK and US authorities aimed at signing an "open skies" agreement to liberalise access to Heathrow. The US has said it will only approve the link-up, which would give BA and American 60 per cent of flights between the UK and US, if an open skies deal was successfully concluded.

The letter continued: "The conclusion of an open sky agreement between the UK and the USA remains, for the time being, hypothetical and its content is unknown. It is thus impossible to assess its impact." firmed his total opposition to slottrading, where BA could receive compensation for giving up some

Mr Van Miert warned that "if slots. The airline has indicated it will accept limited divestiture of slots, but only if it can "sell" them with a view to adopting quickly director of international affairs

a decision along the present lines, the Commission may be forced to initiate a procedure under Article 169 of the EC Treaty." Article 169 gives the EC the power to take legal action against member states.

Rival carriers immediately welcomed the letter as a sign that the EC was flexing its muscles over its role in approving such alliances. Mike Whittaker, for United Airlines, said: "This These powers rest with the relmove doesn't surprise me at all. The Commission has been looking to establish jurisdiction in this affair and its pretty clear that they're going to use their power over slot allocation to do that."

However British Airways insisted that the EC has no authority to disrupt transatlantic link-ups. "Brussels has no pow-ers to block transatlantic al-

evant national regulatory authority, which in our case is the Department of Trade and Industry working through the Office of Fair Trading. A spokeswoman for the DTI

said Mr Lang had not yet received the letter and declined to comment further. However it is sure to widen the rift with the EC over the alliance.

C&W plans to pay off senior

Chris Godsmark

Wireless have been offered substantial extra bonus payments if they agree to take vol-untary redundancy after the £5bn cable merger goes ahead. Executives are believed to have been promised compensation amounting to up to 60 per cent of salary, on top of any con-

Senior managers at Cable &

tractual severance payments. The unusual catch is that the bonusses are at the personal discretion of Dick Brown, C&W's American chief executive who joined the group last summer with a mandate to shake up the bureaucratic internal manage-ment culture.

Mr Brown is thought to have outlined his scheme to executives who were called together for a "morale-boosting" meeting before Christmas. As he de-tailed the plan, it became clear that only staff who left C&W would be eligible. He also said the final say on who received the cash would be up to him.

Thousands of job cuts are like ly in the merger between Mer-cury, C&W's UK phone subsidiary and three cable companies: Nynex CableComms; Bell Cablemedia; and the UK operations of Videotron. Many senior management jobs could go in the shake-up, as the fourorganisations involved merge executive posts. Mr Brown is already known to be keen to bring in talent from outside, including senior figures from the US telecommunications sector.

Last night a C&W spokesman declined to confirm the existense of the bonus scheme. "Everything we do with out employees is confidential."

However, details of the arrangement come as the original April deadline for the merger looks increasingly optimistic. There's just no way they can put this together by April and get the company quoted on the stock market, said a source yesterday. Concern over the merger timetable knocked 4p off Cable

& Wireless shares, which closed at 465.5p

The announcement of who will run the new business is not thought likely to happen this week. The C&W spokesman yesterday disputed that the an-nouncement had been originally planned for a week ago. He commented: "We are not far off but as usual you have to get absolutely right. It isn't a hold up

Legal threat: Karel van Miert, the Competition Commissioner, says he has the power to act against member states

In addition, Mr Van Miert con-

He said slot-trading would restrict competition for other airlines anxious to gain a foothold in the market. He indicated that Neil Kinnock, Transport Commissioner, has also concluded that slot-trading was illegal under EC law.

disputed by the OFT.

the UK continues its procedure

The volume of business rose

ception of securities traders.

to other airlines, a principle not

CBI reports booming confidence in the City

ities of securities, banking, finance houses, building soci-

eties and the insurance indus-

try and shows they will continue

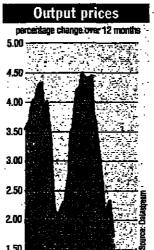
to invest strongly in information

technology over coming years.

"The buoyancy in the finan-

The survey covers the activ- cial sector, which is even Newberry, partner at Coopers & stronger than expected last quarter, is in our experience making companies much more aware of the need to focus recruitment to

secure high quality people and of the vital importance of welltargeted IT investment," said Pat



Lybrand. The survey also highlights discrepancies across the sector.

Among securities traders, business confidence rose for the first time in three surveys as result of the sharp pick-up in the value and volume of business over the three months. At banks, business confi-

dence recorded the sharpest rate of increase since 1989, with the level of business reaching well above normal after being below normal for most of the past seven years.

in contrast, business confi dence among building societies rose more moderately than at any time since 1995.

The profitability of securities firms rose during the period, defying their expectations the previous quarter of a marked decline. While banks saw profitabiliv rise at its sharpest rate since September 1994, they expect a marked slowdown in growth of profitability over the coming three months.

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caposure in retail warehous a pension fund, has acquired Suppling Centres for £37,15m.

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in the sense that things are mov-ing along very satisfactorily."

Low inflation hopes cheer Clarke

Industry (CBI) and Coopers & Lybrand survey of financial services firms showed confidence in the last quarter of 1996 rose Signs of low inflation in the pipeline and per cent in the 12 months to December. This at its fastest rate since Destreet helped take the pressure off the Chantion since October 1986. cember 1989, when the survey cellor of the Exchequer to agree to a rise in the cost of borrowing after tomorrow's Securities firms said the meeting with Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, writes Diane Coyle. Although a majority of City analysts still ex-

shortage of managerial and su-pervisory staff had risen to its highest level since the survey bepect Mr George to advise higher interest gan, and they expect to inrates, financial market sentiment has crease employee numbers only swung in favour of the view that Mr Clarke modestly over the next three can probably keep them unchanged before months. These expected shortthe election. ages could partially explain re-The pound fell more than a pfennig ports of soaring salaries and against the German Mark yesterday after the publication of figures showing prices

The survey also showed that profitability among financial

although firms expect a slower rate of increase in profits in the first quarter of this year. "Strong growth in the financial services mirrors the pick-up

rate since September 1994,

pronounced increases over the coming months," said Sudhir Junankar, associate director of the survey began. With the execonomic analysis at the CBI. What is interesting is that it firms expected further rises in

services firms rose at its fastest firms expecting further but less

doesn't suggest an unsustainable boom," Mr Junankar added.

steady but not surging sales on the high was the lowest rate of output price infla-Prices manufacturers pay for materials have fallen by nearly 6 per cent during the past 12 months, helped by the strength of

the pound. Separately, a survey of high street sales by the British Retail Consortium showed that retail spending grew last month at a slower pace than during October and November. A flurry of Christmas trading statements from

retailers confirmed that most had recorded strong but not booming sales. However, a report published today by research group Income Data Services notes signs that higher inflation is starting to affect pay awards.

Mixed evidence on the state of the economy during the past week has given Mr Clarke useful ammunition against the policy. "It would be one of the most surprising moves of the year if the Chancelor raised rates this week," said Simon Briscoe, an economist at Nikko Europe.

Boots yesterday confirmed other retailers' comments when it said Christmas sales were slow through December until a final surge in the last few days. Announcing a 6 per cent increase in Christmas trading on the same period last year, Boots chief executive Lord Blyth said the performance was "satisfactory overall".

Lloyds victory puts Gehe ahead of Boots

Magnus Grimond

Gehe, the German pharmaceutical distributor, yesterday consolidated its hold on Britain's high street pharmacies after it emerged victorious from its long-running battle for Lloyds Chemists.

Victory was handed to the German group, which raised its offer to £684m on Friday, after rival bidders UniChem bowed out of the fray, saying it would not increase its own offer. The announcement allowed Gehe to swoop on over 57 per cent of Lloyds' shares, taking its holding and acceptances to a commanding 78.4 per cent. UniChem, which netted a profit of around £3m selling its near 10 per cent stake in Lloyds to Gehe yesterday, saw its shares jump 13.5p to 269.5p on relief that it had decided not to top the ommended by the Lloyds board.

Gehe will now own one of the largest chains of pharmacies in the UK. Lloyds' 900-odd outlets. added to the 360 outlets in its existing AAH group, will create a new chain of over 1,200 chemists, just ahead of Boots, hitherto the market leader. The group will command around 33 per cent of drugs distribution to independent chemists, a couple of percentage points ahead of

charged at the factory gate rose by only 1.7

UniChem. Dieter Kammerer, Gehe's chairman, said he could not reveal full details of his plans for the new group ahead of a meet-ing with Lloyds management tomorrow. But he said the first task would be streamlining the two organisations, particularly the distribution network, which largely duplicates the one belonging to AAH. This would be "straightened out pretty fast", he said, and could involve redundancies, although they would not be on a large scale.

Airbus partners may pay BAe in deal to create single company Michael Harrison

British Aerospace is in line for a substantial payment from its Airbus partners after they agreed vesterday to pool production facilities and maintain their shareholdings at existing levels when the consortium converts into a single commercial company in 1999.

The agreement to transfer manufacturing operations into the new company along with engineering, testing, procurement and customer service activities is a crucial first step on the road to the restructuring of Airbus. A binding memorandum of

understanding signed yesterday by the four partners will en-able Airbus to operate as a fully commercial entity as opposed to the sales and marketing organisation that it presently is. But the pooling of production assets is likely to lead to financial compensation being shared out among the partners.

BAe, which makes wings for the Airbus family at its Chester plant, has a 20 per cent stake in Airbus. Aerospatiale of France and Daimler Benz of Germany each have 37.9 per cent and Casa of Spain has 4.2 per cent.

However, BAe is likely to argue that the efficiency and profitability of its own Airbus facilities will make them worth more than 20 per cent of the equity when Airbus converts. Rather than fiddle with the

existing shareholdings, the partners will determine respective valuations for the assets each company is contributing. The Belgian arm of accountants Price Waterhouse is conducting an audit at all four Airbus partners with the aim of drawing up a pro-forma set of accounts by This is likely to lead to com-

pensation being paid. One estimate is that BAe could be in line for payments worth up to £400m. An alternative would be to adjust the basis on which Airbus shares out profits. Because BAe did not join the consortium until the early 1980s after the Airbus A300 had already been launched it does not receive one-fifth of annual profits. The profit sharing formula could be amended to take account of the differing assets contributed to

the new entity. The assets to be contributed and their valuation will be decided by the end of 1997, Airbus said. The other tasks to be completed this year include drawing up a new management structure and deciding where the company will be registered. The four partners will also have to resolve the tax implications of converting to commercial

There had been reports that the French were less keen than the British or Germans to transfer production facilities into the new company. But industry sources rejected this, suggesting Aerospatiale's main concern was not with the principle of pooling assets but with the timing of it, being anxious to ensure it did not happen until its merger with Dassault was completed. "The MOU signed by the partners is a very good compromise which satisfies

everyone", said one source. The restructuring will enable Airbus to overhaul its efficiency levels and procurement policy in a move that is likely to losses across Europe. Airbus will also be able to tap

world financial markets for funding for projects such as the 600-plus seater A3XX super-

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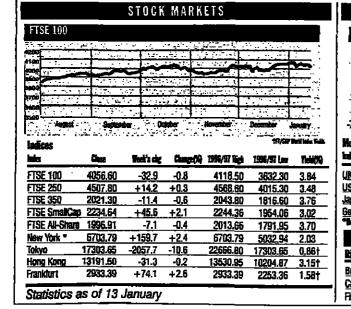
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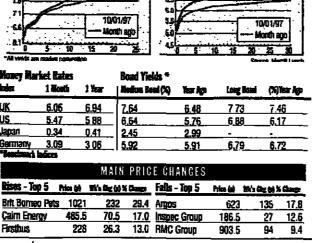
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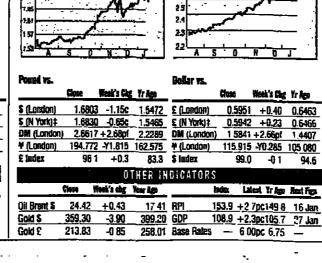
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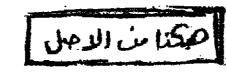
THE INDEPENDENT TABLOID







CURRENCIES



C&W plans to pay off senior staff Chris Godsmark

March Victoria Carde & Carde &

marine and the state of the st

Monetary policy need not be a political football As if Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, doesn't have enough on his decision look reasonable, especially if the less networking conference, few of those in the new would have a case.

plate already, it seems that he now has to answer to the Labour Party too on monetary COMMENT policy. According to Labour officials, if he doesn't crack the whip in the run-up to the election, thus embarrassing his present master, Kenneth Clarke, he won't get much of a hearing from Labour for his case for an independent Bank of England. So much for any remaining hope of a non-political monetary policy. The Chancellor wants the Governor proper independence lax as can be, Labour as tight as possible. It

scarcely needs saying that both are motivated primarily by political advantage. Which makes the Chancellor's meeting tomorrow with Mr George a more than usually interesting one. Mixed signals on the economy provide the Chancellor with the perfect excuse for relaxing the strict mone-tary diet. It will be difficult for Mr George to insist on a tough regime during the next few months without appearing to be med-dling in politics himself.

There could be no better illustration of the need for proper independence for the Bank of England, and the sooner the better. The present arrangement of publishing the minutes of the meeting several weeks later does not insulate interest rate decisions from political considerations. Labour's gimmick of setting up a monetary policy committee to give secret advice would be not, as proposed, be much of an improvement either. Interest rate calls are a matter of judgement, committee is divided in its advice.

Mr Clarke would be well advised to surprise the City with a rise in interest rates this week. To keep inflation below 2.5 per cent he must react to mixed signals, and not wait until every last indicator points to higher prices before he acts. But what he should do and what he will do are not necessarily the same thing. If he decides against a rate increase he will be aided by the fact that many, perhaps most, City economists do not take the inflation target seriously. They want the instant gratification of faster growth. Many of these analysts were arguing yesterday that there is no need for base rates to rise now because the futures market is expecting only a one percentage point increase before the end of the year.

If we already had an independent Bank of England, the level of base rates would be a bit higher than they are now, but long term interest rates would be lower. There would be less risk of a short-term inflationary binge, and a much greater chance of the sustain-able growth Mr Clarke says he wants.

The long arm and big nose of Mr Van Miert

There are, it seems, very few things in this world beyond the reach of Karel van Miert, the European Competition Com-

manufacturers, then you can bet that the alliance between British Airways and American Airlines was always going to fall comfortably within his writ.

حكذا من الاعل

So it is that lan Lang, who as President of the Board of Trade is minded to let the alliance proceed, has been sent the Brussels equivalent of a threatening lawyer's letter. Approve this deal as it stands and we'll see you in the European Court of Justice, is the gist. There is a precedent for this sort of Euro interference in the shape of the extra conditions that BA was forced to submit to when it swallowed up British Caledonian a decade ago.

On this occasion BA expected to be cleared without Brussels' intervention, particularly as the deal has already gone through the hoops at the Office of Fair Trading and is about to be crawled all over by the US Justice Department. Mr van Miert has other ideas. He believes that the alliance constitutes abuse of a dominant position, that the conditions imposed by the OFT are nowhere near sufficient and that, in any case, it would be illegal for BA to sell the take-off and landing slots it has been told to give up.

Strong stuff, But does Mr van Miert really have the right to poke his nose into what is essentially a domestic affair affect-

But that is not his argument. Indeed, anything, it will probably improve the lot of air travellers on the Continent by providing greater competition for other national flag

His argument instead is that it will harm the lot of UK and US passengers. If that is the case he needs to explain why he allowed through other such alliances involving the likes of Lufthansa, KLM and Sabena without so much as a raised eyebrow. The reality, as usual, is that the regulators in Brussels are playing catch-up and what better subject to cut their teeth on than BA, particularly when the airline and the Government had made it plain they thought it none of Mr van diert's concern.

If he must intervene, then he has an obligation at the very least to re-examine all the other alliances so far agreed. Preferably, however, he should keep his nose out.

Tories find time for an alpine conference

For an event which boasts that some com-Posnies rearrange their board meetings so that senior executives can attend, the World Economic Forum annual conference in Davos, Switzerland, is sometimes more ing US and British consumers? If Mr van instructive for those not going than those Miert's complaint was that the alliance who are. Billed as Europe's premier busi-

position to hitch their wagon to the international conference circuit miss it gladly, for with its alpine setting and none too taxing schedule, it is generally thought a bit of a peach.

So who's not going this time? Quite a lot of the Middle East for a start. The conference coincides with Ramadan, the annual Moslem month of fasting. There's no one from our government in waiting, New Labour, either, which given that the con-ference is to be attended by three Cabinet members, might seem a bit curious. Tony Blair, who was invited, has written back to say he cannot attend because of uncertainty over the election date; he doesn't want to interrupt his "campaigning schedule". Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, apparently isn't interested in the conference themes of globalisation and the worldwide IT revolution either. He hasn't replied,

anyway.

And what of the existing Government? Can it, any more than Tony Blair, afford to miss out on a campaigning opportunity? A cynic would say that the answer lies with a Government that knows its number is up and therefore doesn't actually have a lot of work to do.

That and the not unrelated issue of job prospecting, for which there is plenty of opportunity at Davos. New Labour have big obs to look forward to; the present lot must already be focused on other things.

£395m Freemans sale fails to boost Sears

Home shopping market shares

Nigel Cope

Liam Strong, the beleaguered Sears chief executive, moved to placate disillusioned investors yesterday when he announced the sale of the group's Freemans mail-order business to Littlewoods for £395m. He also promised to use the proceeds to return £410m to shareholders in six months time in the form of a special dividend or share buy-back.

There could be no

better illustration

of the need for

for the Bank of

England, and the

sooner the better'

However, the move failed to impress the stock market where Sears shares remained unchanged at 88p. The sale price was below market expectations and analysts still predicted that Mr Strong would be replaced and that Sears was a candidate for break up. "Sears will have. £400m sitting in the bank in the short term during which they a bid," said Nick Bubb at MeesPierson. "There won't be a long term."

The Freemans deal will see Sears take a £220m goodwill write off which will force the group into a £165m loss in the current year. It will be the second substantial loss in consec-

If the deal receives approval from shareholders it will signal the first move in a long awaited shake-up of Britain's sleepy £5.5bn agency mail-order

year history and will make the privately owned group a powerful rival to market leader Great Universal Stores with an almost

identical share of 24 per cent. The integration of the two businesses is likely to see hundreds of job losses at Freemans locations, which include a London head office, a warehouse in Peterborough and call centres in Sheffield and Orpington.

It is the most significant acquisition in Littlewoods' 70-pared with 10,000 at Littlewoods home shopping.

Littlewoods would not be

drawn on possible redundancies but said it boped to make annual cost savings of £25m after three years on distribution, sourcing and marketing.

Littlewoods is funding the

deal largely through new banking facilities. Though gearing will be around 58 per cent, corporate strategy director Chris

Baker said the group was not fi-nancially stretched and could afford other deals. Freemans made trading

profits last year of £38m but this year's profits are expected to be substantially lower. Littlewoods said it would re-

tain the Freemans brand name and build up its direct sales business. It is not taking The Source, a high street housewares format which was part of the Freemans group. Sears will now either seek a buyer for the stores, or a joint-venture

The move signals a more aggressive approach by Littlewoods under new chief executive James Ross, who joined from Cable & Wireless last year. Earlier this week Bob Willett resigned as managing director of the stores division halting the stores' expansion plan to concentrate on mail order. The new head of the store division is Mike Wynne, who used to run Littlewoods' international division.

A Christmas trading statement from Littlewoods yesterday revealed that the high street stores were the weakest performer with like-for-like sales up by just 3.4 per cent. The Index catalogue shops recorded a 6.6 per cent gain. Sales at the home shopping division were up by



A weak position: Liam Strong, beleaguered chief executive of Sears. With £400m in the bank in the short term after Littlewoods bought Freemans, 'there won't be a long term'

IN BRIEF

• Ian Byatt, the water industry regulator, criticised six of the 10 privatised water and sewerage companies for failing to agree to a voluntary compensation scheme for customers whose supplies are hit by drought orders. Mr Byatt said four companies, Anglian, Thames, Northumbrian and Severn Trent, had agreed to the proposals but had refused to agree to have the scheme formally incorporated into their operating licenses. Southern Water and Yorkshire Water had also refused to accept Mr Byatt's role as arbiter of the plan. He said he was disappointed at the outcome: "I am particularly concerned where a company's reluctance to accept my proposals is coupled with high leakage rates."

 Woolwich Building Society is sending out 55,000 supplementary letters this week to members who were wrongly informed last week on whether or not they were entitled to vote next month on the plan to convert the society into a bank. The great majority are individuals who did not have the necessary £100 in their accounts on the day in December when the society drew up its list of accountholders but topped up their accounts by the end of the year. Most of those who felt they were wrongly disqualified jammed the telephone helplines the society opened over the weekend. A third letter may be needed for 15,000 members whose cheques had been received but not cleared by the 31 December qualifying date.

• TI Group said its Dowty Aerospace division and Messier-Dowty, its joint venture with Snecma, have won contracts worth a total \$200m (£120m) for the new Bell Boeing 609 tiltrotor aircraft. TTs Dowty Aerospace will supply the complete suite of fly-by-wire flight control actuators and the associated test rig. Messier-Dowty will provide an integrated landing gear system, including the legs, wheels, tyres, brakes, brake control and landing gear control systems.

 Jarvis Hotels has acquired two hotels in England and has exchanged contracts on a third in Scotland for a total of £16.22m cash. The three hotels have been purchased from administrative receivers Coopers & Lybrand. The hotels being acquired, which are all freehold properties, are: The Fairfield Manor in York, the Grange Park in Hull, and the Learmonth in Edinburgh.

• Pillar Property Investments has announced several retail investments. It has exchanged contracts to acquire two retail warehouse park investments in Newport, Wales and Northwich, Cheshire for a total of £25.3m, as well as exchanging contracts to fund a retail park development in Dumfries, Scotland which will have an estimated value of around £9m. The transactions bring Pilar's exposure in retail warehouse parks to £140m. In addition, PillarCaisse, the joint venture between Pillar and SITQ, the Canadian pension fund, has acquired two further properties, from P&O Shopping Centres for £37.15m, bringing its portfolio to £200m.

 Dixons Group has agreed to buy the retail assets of Harry Moore, the Ireland-based company engaged in electrical retailing, television rental, finance and mobile communications. No financial details were given. The Harry Moore retail chain encompasses six stores based in or around Dublin.

• Clyde Petroleum is advising shareholders to continue to reject the takeover bid from Gulf Canada Resources, saying the level of acceptances received by the Canadian group is "inconsequential".

Last week, Gulf claimed acceptances for 0.02 per cent of Clyde.

Europe set for £32bn of state sell-offs

Peter Rodgers Financial Editor

European governments will sell a record \$53hn (£32bn) of state assets in 1997 compared with \$43bn last year as they rush to reduce debt interest payments to improve their chances of qualifying for monetary union, according to a report by JP Morgan Securities.

Over the next three years, \$118bn of companies and other issets are expected to be privatised, more than half the total since the state sell-offs began in 1977, according to the

vatisation report. An acceleration of privatisation aimed at improving the national accounts of potential Emu members is likely to reinforce fears that the single currency project is being rushed through too fast and that accounts are being massaged to

qualify.
Although some of the higher level of privatisations in 1997 will be due to slippages from last year. JP Morgan said the increase was to " a great extent a reflection of the urgency to complete some of the privatisation programmes ahead of Emu".

The proceeds from state asset sales are one-off items and

Whitbread suffers

post-Christmas chill

do not count directly towards the Maastricht criteria for budget deficits. However, the cash income

does reduce government debt service costs, so indirectly helps spruce up the national accounts.

JP Morgan said: "We believe European governments may feel under increasing pressure to accelerate their privatisation programmes to place themselves on track to meet the Maastricht 3 per cent deficit cri-

Lower debt servicing pay-ments were particularly important for France, Italy, Spain and

Tom Stevenson

Greg Hutchings, chief executive of Smith & Wesson to Hovis

money back to shareholders

via a share buy-back or special

half year of record earnings and

acquisition, US automotive

hose maker Gates, making a

promising start since its acqui-

Mr Hutchings said that giv-

ing money back to shareholders

would tie Tomkins' hands on any

large acquisition because its

currently poor market rating

meant that it was forced to pay for deals with cash. He said the

company was looking to make

an acquisition of between £1bn

and £2bn, although any deal

sition last July for £750m.

City Editor

The investment bank added that some countries were also employing one-off operations to bring down their deficits, such as the payment to the French government by France Telecom for assuming the state company's future pension liabilities. This is expected to re-

duce the French government deficit by 0.5 percentage points. The report said other countries were relying on lower transfers to state-owned corporations, offset by higher government guaranteed borrowing, which does not count against the

Maastricht debt criterion. The Maastricht Treaty sets a next three years.

maximum deficit of 3 per cent of gross domestic product while total government debt must not exceed 60 per cent of GDP. JP Morgan said Italy stood out as having the most ambitious privatisation programme for 1997, at close to \$200n, or 37 per

cent of the European total. France is second, accounting for 20 per cent of privatisation

revenues, followed by Spain and Germany.
The UK, having largely completed its privatisation pro-

gramme under the Tories, is at the bottom of the league with no sell-offs predicted over the

months to October of £168.8m.

an increase of 33.9 per cent on

the comparable period in 1995.

As well as a £20m operating prof-

it contribution from Gates, prof-

its were boosted by the latest

period covering 27 weeks rather

than the usual 26, and by the

strength of the pound increasing

Mr Hutchings said: "The in-

tegration of Gates is proceed-

ing well and we are delighted by

the quality of its operations.

Tomkins is in excellent shape

and we look forward to deliv-

ering another encouraging per-

formance in the second half."

Tomkins said its record first-

the value of dollar profits.

Tomkins shoots down buy-back proposals

Tom Stevenson

Whithread shares missed out on the FTSE 100 party yesterday after the brewing and leisure group warned that its profits margins had taken a hit over the Christmas period. Despite a 50.7 point rise in the index of leading shares, Whitbread shares fell 21.5p to 740p.

The trading pattern was a slow pre-holiday period followed by a strong Christmas week although bad weather affected new year sales, especially in the South and East," Whit-

One analyst said the fall was an overreaction to a margin hit which probably only cost the company £3m in lost profits, but he added that the warning had precipitated the first downgrade in profits at Whitbread in more than 18 months and would con-

tinue to affect sentiment. Whitbread is understood to have taken on temporary staff in cline in margins.

its food operations to cover the busy Christmas period and been hit by the effects of the recent cold snap which meant the increase in costs was not offset by a commensurate rise in sales. There had also been a shift to large 24 can multi-packs of beer which sell at a bigger discount.

According to analysts the move was an effort by Whitbread to force some brokers to rein in their expectations of about £330m pre-tax profit for the year to February to a more realistic £320m. The result will be the last before chief executive Peter Jarvis hands over the reins to David Thomas, currently the head of Whitbread's restaurants and leisure arm.

There was some surprise that reported strong trading in the Whithread inns managed pubs operation, and from Marriott Hotels, Traveling and David Lloyd Leisure, had not been enough to offset such a small dewould probably not be within announced profits for the six the next year, given the amount of management time being

spent on integrating Gates. With Tomkins' shares rated at conglomerate Tomkins, yestera sizeable discount to the market, because of its association day poured scorn on recent calls for the company to hand with the unfashionable conglomerates sector, it cannot buy other companies with its shares dividend. He called on investors and so needs to conserve its to focus instead on another £370m cash pile. Even with its cash reserves, an acquisition of dividends with Tomkins' latest the proposed size would mean borrowings almost matching shareholders funds, a level at

which investors become nervous. Mr Hutchings added that Tomkins was generating a return on the capital it employed of almost 19 per cent compared with the cost of those funds of only between 10 and 12 per cent. In those circumstances, he said, giving money back to shareholders would destroy rather than create shareholder value.

He was speaking as Tomkins

half figures were the 13th suc-

cessive rise in earnings per share since 1984. During that period Tomkins has averaged a 25.6 per cent compound rise in eps, compared with an average of only 9 per cent for UK companies.

Investment Column, page 16

rebound boosts markets Magnus Grimond Japanese shares yesterday

Japanese

shares

clawed back some of the dizzying falls sustained over the last week in the biggest one-day gain for the market seen for 18 months. The rebound dragged up Asian markets, while London jumped to within a few points of its all-time high on receding fears of an imminent rate rise.

A switchback session for Tokyo saw shares slip close to the psychologically important 17,000 level in early trading only to reverse that with a storming 1,100 point rise at one stage on

short covering. The Nikk closed 815.14 points ahead, or 4.71 per cent, to 18,118.79. offsetting part of the 2,142.35 point fall over the previous our trading days.

Japanese investors, suffering from historically low interest rates, have fled to other markets for better returns on their money. On Friday alone, the index slid 770 points, the biggest drop since January 1995. Keiko Kondo, a strategist at Merrill Lynch Japan, attributed the rebound to bottomfishing, "Since last week's fall was so sharp, the index [at current levels] looked attractive and bargain-hunters emerged." But he cautioned that the market could again be hit by companies taking profits on shareholdings shead of corpo-rate book closings at the end of March.

Analysts called the rebound technical, however, and said it did not signal any major reversal of the bearish trend, adding that the market was still gripped by worries about the economy and the health of some financial institutions.

This analysis was at odds with the futures market, where March contracts briefly surged nearly 1,000 points before closing at 18,130, up 980 points.

Rumours that the government was preparing to step in to support share prices were quashed, but there was evidence of damage limitation. Shoichiro Toyoda, chairman of the powerful business lobby Keidanren, said: "Although there is not much confidence in the economy, I don't think the conditions at the moment are bad."

Asked about recent weakness in the stock market. Mr Toyoda said he was worried about the price falls, but added that movements in stock prices did not necessarily coincide with those in corporate earnings.

Meanwhile. The Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, was reported as saying that Japan's economic policy should not be formed only by looking at current stock prices, while other government sources said they did not expect the economy to be hurt by the stock market's weakness.

The Tokyo bounce, coming on the back of Friday's rally on Wall, Street, saw several European stock markets close at record highs yesterday. In London, the FT-SE 100 index broke through the 4,100 level, ending 50.7 points ahead at 4,107.3, just short of the all-time high of 4.118.5 struck on New Year's Eve.

Wall Street followed Friday's record by rising further in morning trade, but the Dow Jones was up only around 10 points as European markets closed.

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Tomkins finds big is still beautiful

looks more and more like a laid back Californian as his hair heads towards his shoulders but he was on a short fuse vesterday discussing the City's persistent refusal to recognise his company's achievements and potential.

Twice a year Tomkins wheels out an impressive set of data to back up its argument that, despite the range of its products from Hunter wellies to Smith &Wesson handguns, from loaves of bread to hieycles, it is no Hanson or BTR and should not be rated as if it were. To an extent, investors have cottoned on and Tomkins shares have outperformed the diversified industrials sector by 45 per cent over the past three years. Against such a dismal backdrop, however, that does little to distract from the fact that the shares trade on a sceptical multiple of earnings.

Figures for the half year to October were flattered by an extra week compared with last year and boosted to an per cent and a 13 per cent rise in the dividend completing an unbroken sequence of increases since 1984.

The figures were another snub to cynics who questioned the Ranks Hovis McDougall acquisition five years ago and suggested that the latest big purchase, of automotive hose maker Gates, is going to be a much quicker and easier integration than the bread maker. It is proving a long education process but analysts are finally getting the message that, despite its apparent rag-hag of businesses. Tomkins really does have a focus - on manufacturing.

The City is quick to call on Tomkins to bend to the latest business school fashion and the company doggedly refuses to be swayed by the argument. Its refusal to follow Hanson down the break-up path has been vindicated by the failure of that demerger to create any shareholder value and the latest refusul to hand money back to shareholders has more than a ring of common sense about it.

Tomkins reckons it generates a return on its capital of getting on for 20 per cent compared to the cost of that money of between 12 and 13 per cent. Plainly there would come a point when its share price were so depressed that a buy-back was the best use of the company's £370m cash pile, but it is not now. The restrictions it would place on any cash-funded acquisition would be

Tomkins problem is that, despite the steadiness of its earnings growth, the scale of the rise is so pedestrian. Prof-

Greg Hutchings, chief executive of burns-to-guns conglomerate Tomkins, THE INVESTMENT COLUMN still be plenty of scope for expanding the speciality chemical side, while its

The shares, unexciting performers in recent years, put on 9p to 312.5p on

are focusing their supply requirements on a smaller number of larger players.

This, alongside moves to widen and

build the product base into areas like surfactants, food chemicals and sol-

vents, helped send volumes 7 per cent

higher in the latest six months, offset-

ting the price erosion.

The prospects for more of the same look good. Ellis is market leader in the UK in distributing commodity chem-

icals like caustic soda, nitric acid and

phosphates with a market share of around 30 per cent. But there should

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Tomkins : at a glance

its of £425m in the year to April would and full-year forecasts were being imply an 11 per cent increase and the nudged up close to £30m yesterday. forecast for the following 12 months is even less exciting. A p/c ratio of 12 is

harsh but does not represent a massive valuation anomaly. Solid value.

Ellis & Everard finds its focus

Chemicals group Ellis & Everard went through a torrid patch in the early 1990s. Profits took a hammering after an ill-judged diversification into socalled performance chemicals like cleaners and aerosols had to be re
recent years, put on 9p to 312.5p on the news, taking them to within a few pence of their all-time high.

That looks fully justified by the potential. The group tends to find the going harder in periods of deflation, so the latest figures are impressive given the overall price reduction of 6 per cent in the period and as much as 20 per cent in areas like polymers. Strong positions in both its traditional market in the UK and the US, into which it moved 15 years ago, means Ellis is winning business from customers like Procter & Gamble and Unilever who are focusing their supply requirements cleaners and aerosols had to be reversed. But the group is now back, firmly focused on its profitable niche extent by the strength of the pound especially against the dollar, but they were yet another very impressive performance, with earnings per share up 18 to around 60.000 customers, large and

Profits have begun to motor in the last few years, with the last of the under-performers being ditched in 1995, and

Pre-tax profits (£m)

Dividends per share (pence)

Profit by activity (2m)

US share remains a minimal 2 per cent despite being the fifth largest operator

Strategic advantage is enhanced by its strong environmental position, while the strong pound, if continued, will slice only around £600,000 from translation of second-half figures. On a forward p/e of 14, the shares are good value.

Seasonal cheer for Next

Next is very much in the Marks & Spencer camp when it comes to Christmas trading statements. Both believe that brevity is a virtue and yesterday's effort from Next ran to all of three sentences. But when your numbers are as good as these no one

is going to worry.

Next clearly enjoyed a very merry
Christmas with combined sales in the 24 weeks to 11 January up 16 per cent on the same period last year. Star per-former yet again was the Next Direc-tory catalogue, where sales were 26 per cent higher. The stores also showed good growth with sales up 14 per cent on selling space 5 per cent higher. But shareholders who have beamed

with pleasure as they have watched the meteoric growth of Next shares in the last six years will always ask the same question. Have I had the best of the run and should I bail out? Probably not.

For some observers the outstanding success of the Next formula remains something of a mystery. The shops always look busy but not that busy. And the merchandise is good, but is it streets ahead of rivals? Figures like this suggest consumers think it is.

Can Next keep it up? Next Directory still has plenty of scope for growth though it will not be able to deliver 26 per cent increases every year. The market may get more competitive with the Littlewoods deal with Freemans consolidating the industry. But Next is well advanced with the direct approach to mail-order selling that rivals are only just beginning to copy. For both the high street stores and the directory, the strength of consumer spending and the coming building society windfalls will benefit retailers with strong brands like

Yesterday's numbers were good enough for analysts to leave their full-year profit forecasts unchanged at £157m. With the shares up 12.5p to 541.5p yesterday they trade on a forward rating of 18. Not cheap but still worth holding.

Hilton Hotels reunited after 32 years

City Editor

Ladbroke and Hilton Hotels of the US signed a co-operation agreement yesterday that will reunite the Hilton brand for the first time in 32 years. The deal was first mooted last August.

The deal creates a worldwide marketing alliance for the 400 Hilton hotels in 49 countries which have operated under different control within and outside the US since 1964 when Hilton International (HIC) was spun off from Hilton Hotels. Lad-broke acquired HIC in 1987.

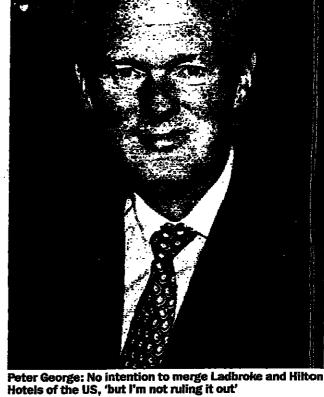
Peter George, chief executive of Ladbroke, said all options, including a takeover of Hilton by Ladbroke, had been explored over the past year. For a variety of reasons, including tax complications, however, it had been decided that the best way forward lay in a marketing, customer loyalty and reservations co-operation between the two

He said: "There is no hidden agenda. There is no intention to merge and last year we did look at every option. But in the fullness of time who knows? I'm not ruling it out."

The companies said that the deal covering sales and marketing, loyalty programmes and development would fuel sales growth and dispel the confusion that has surrounded the two groups in recent years.

The details of the deal unveiled yesterday allow for a 20year agreement between the two companies, twice as long as envisaged last summer when the proposal was first announced. Another significant change was the decision by the companies not to invest in the actual hotel assets owned by the other party to the agreement.

The deal allows for both sides to take a stake of up to 20
per cent in the other and yeswith responsibility for promot-



the American company's intention to acquire a 5 per cent holding in Ladbroke in due course. If that stake came in the form of new shares it would represent a cash inflow of more than £130m for Ladbroke, but the stake could also be bought in the market.

Mr Bollenbach will join Lad-broke's board and Peter George is to be appointed as a non-executive director of Hilton Hotels.

The implementation of the sales and marketing elements of the alliance will be overseen by

terday Stephen Bollenbach, ing Hilton as a uniform brand president of HHC, said it was world-wide; operating the world-wide; operating the Hilton HHonors customer loyalty programme; and operating the existing world-wide joint reservation system. The two companies have also

Calf

cleared up an area of historical conflict by licensing the Conrad name to HIC for future development outside the US for a period of 20 years. Conrad, which has only 10 hotels in the chain, had been Hilton Hotels' vehicle for expansion outside the US and was the cause of legal dispute between the two.

The deal was welcomed in the City where benefits worth up to £10m a year have been pencilled

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Ashquay bid | Schroders error goes to the wire casts confusion

Patrick Tooher

The hostile battle for control of UK Estates went to the wire last night as Ashquay, which is bid-ding £21m in the Manchesterbased property development group, sought to buy shares in the market to secure outright

In a statement issued to the Stock Exchange last night after the final closing date for its offer had closed, Ashquay said that with the Takeover Panel's approval, it would announce the level of acceptances by mid-

But the outcome looked too close to call after shares in UK Estates closed 0.75p higher at 28.5p, while Ashquay ended 0.5p better at 40p, valuing the bid at 30.8p. Ashquay is offering 10 shares for every 13 ordinary UK Estates shares.

Just minutes before the offer closed Ashquay said it would borrow up to £750,000 "on normal commercial terms" to acquire shares in UK Estates. The money will be borrowed from Close Brothers, a sub-sidiary of Close Brothers UK Estates fell from £610,000 Finance, who are acting as to £382,000.

financial advisers to Ashquay.
Ashquay is thought to have used the money to go into the market and buy a 3 per cent stake held in UK Estates by the Estates. It also derided the lack Co-Op Bank. Sources familiar of a cash alternative.

with the bid said uncertainty about whether Ashquay would be able to secure registration of the Co-Op shares with the Takeover Panel had caused a delay in the outcome of the bid being announced.

Ashquay has aiready won over investors speaking for 38 per cent of UK Estates' ordinary shares and 16 per cent of its preference shares.

During the often acrimo-nious bid battle Ashquay sought to increase the pressure on UK Estates by sticking to yesterday's deadline as the final closing date for its offer. The Takeover Code had allowed for Ashquay to extend its offer until 27 January.

At one stage, Ashquay accused UK Estates' directors of having a "thorough disregard for shareholders' interests and of "mismanaging the company". It also highlighted UK Estates' administrative costs, which last year totalled £970,000, and the £530,000 UK Estates spent on shares for an employee benefit

But UK Estates rejected the offer, noting Ashquay is a smaller company with net assets less than half those of UK

Dividend

2.85p (2.75p)

source continued.

But Schroders could not exto happen," the source continwish to vote on a bid until nearer the offer deadline do not have to fill out any forms at the first closing date for acceptances.

Cook 2.5p.

over Cook bid SIM's withdrawal now means

Patrick Tooher

There were red faces at Schroders yesterday after the City's leading independent investment bank admitted its fund management arm. Schroder Investment Management, had withdrawn accep-

tance of engineer Triplex Lloyd's hostile £58m bid for William Cook, the steel castings group, due to "a clerical error". The withdrawal is all the more embarrassing because

Schroders, whose corporate finance division is acting for Triplex Lloyd, has a policy of deferring decisions on takeovers until the last possible moment, whereas SIM inadvertently agreed to throw its 5.44 per cent stake in Cook behind the bid at the first closing date.

"It's unsatisfactory," said a source at Schroders. "There is some corporate embarrassment that a colleague has made a mistake.`

Schroders insists the error came to light only after the unusually high level of acceptances for the Triplex Lloyd bid on the first closing date became known. "When they [SIM] realised they had made a mistake they let both sides know," the

plain how the error came about. "As a matter of policy it should be inconceivable for this ued. Shareholders who do not

that just 0.39 per cent of William Cook's shareholders had accepted the Triplex Lloyd bid by New Year's Eve.
"I am glad shareholders are appreciating our strong are:

appreciating our strong argu-

ments on value and prospects and how Triplex Lloyd's offer is derisory, said Andrew Cook, William Cook's chairman. His comments, the latest in

an increasingly heated war of the words, drew a stiff response from the Triplex camp. Andrew Cook knows per-

fectly well that the withdrawal of acceptances ... is the result of one shareholder who accepted the offer due to a clerical error. Andrew Cook knows this because the shareholder in question wrote to explain this to the chairmen of both Triplex Lloyd and William Cook. No other conclusion should be withdrawn from the withdrawal of the acceptance," a statement said.

Nevertheless, the episode is clearly a setback for Triplex Lloyd, who made much of the high level of acceptances at such an early stage of the bid. It also adds to the impression that the highly acrimonious bid, far from being the knockout blow that many analysts assumed at the outset, will have to be increased if William Cook is to lose its independence.

That is certainly what the stock market is suggesting. Triplex Lloyd is offering 309p in cash and shares, with a cash alternative of 295p, but William Cook's shares closed at 360p, up

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2.15bn (1.73bn) 169m (126m) 8.6p (7.25p) 3.06p (2.7p)

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market report/shares

ries about its cable build up, shaded 4p to 465.5p but Cook-

son, on Barclays de Zoete

Wedd and Nat West Securities

Legal & General, the insur-

support, rose 3.5p to 251p.

er, had another rousing session,

up 14.5p to 393.5p. M&G, the

unit trust group, rose 31p to

3i, the investment group

gained 3p to 498.5p, a peak, as Barclays, one of its it original

shareholders, sold its remaining

stake, 2.1 per cent, at 490p. The

£59m deal produced a £42m

profit for the banking group.

Gleves, the clothing group, fell another 2p to 47p follow-

ing its profit warning and crit-

icism of its involvement in the

Westmount, the oil explorer, rose 2p to 47.5p. It has pumped

£344,000 into Desire Petro-

leum, seeking oil and gas

around the Falklands, and

placed 325,000 shares, raising £130,000.

Knickerbox lingerie chain.



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· Constant

Footsie suddenly follows New York's blue chip surge

At long last the stock market, perhaps only briefly, is clinging to New York's coat-tails. Another determined transatlantic surge, lifting the Dow Jones Average to a peak, was for once given a favourable reception rather than the surly indifference which has so often greated high-powered US share displays.

Footsie jumped more than 50 points to within a few points of its high, hit on the final day of last year. Despite its sudden display of strength it is still lagging a long way behind its New York counterpart.

One of the mysteries of the 1990's, at least in the eyes of market followers, is the yawning gap which has opened between the blue chip share measurement of New York

In the past few months there have been attempts to explain York as grotesquely overvalued

and suggesting it is sure to suffer a corrective slump today, to-

morrow or sometime soon. As if defying gravity the stretched New York stock market, said to be over heated by Alan Greeenspan, the US banking chief, has continued to romp ahead and was again hitting new peaks during London's opening.

Tokyo's misfortunes in the past few days have made little impact; even so the overnight rebound was welcomed and added to the market's confi-The latest Whitehall statis-

tics and the mixed bag of festive trading statements combined to strengthen the belief interest rates are likely to remain unchanged after this week's Ken and Eddie meeting. Footsie closed 50.7 points higher, its best one day gain since November, at 4,107.3, just

Trading was again often hectic

MARKET REPORT

ing 1 billion shares. Banks, oils and power shares led the charge. The market view is that anyone with reasonable intelligence should be able to successfully run a bank these days and it seems the merest flip of encouragement can produce sharp price movements. So Credit Lyonnais Laing

support lifted Bank of Scotland 11.5p to 30.8.5p and Royal Bank of Scotland 11p to 568.5p. Abbey National, Bar-clays, National Westminster and even often-overlooked Lloyds TSB also moved ahead.

whip of takeover speculation

some cold spells, particularly in the US, kept the crude price bubbling and action over Clyde Petroleum was enough to alert the market to the possibility of more takeover action. Lasmo was again strong, up 7.5p to 251p. Cairn Energy, however, had its own agenda. Its latest deal with the

حكنات الاعل

the shares 36p to a 521.5p peak. On the generating front National Power surged another 14.5p to 493p and PowerGen edged ahead 5.5p to 601.5p. Awaiting the seemingly inevitable strikes South-

ern Electricity rose 7.5p to

settle my

bills over

the phone"

786.5p and Yorkshire Electricity 4p to 799p.

Festive trading statements had predictable impacts. A flat discourse from the Whitbread brewing and leisure group eroded the shares 21.5p to 740p; Next, with the now expected upbeat statement, put

undermined some, such as Siebe, the engineering group, off 13.5p to 1.014p. Besides currency worries RMC, the building materials group, had to contend with the recent run of poor weather, leaving the shares down 16p at 887.5p. A profit warning from civil engineer Birse late on Friday claimed a 5.5p fall to 19.75p.

Lloyds Chemists fell 1.5p to

525p as UniChem retired from the bid battle, leaving the way clear for Gehe, the German group. Unichem added 13.5p

Taking Stock

Darby, a specialist glass group holding at a 117.5p peak, is trading well but remains a favourite takeover target. It said in the summer it had received approaches volved in takeover talks. Pilkington, Saint Gobain of

France and the US PPG group are among the groups linked with Darby. Its interim profits emerged at £880,000 and around £2.25m is expected for last year. The current year could produce £3.5m.

Troubled Lionheart, being developed as a bathroom accessories company by new chief executive Mark Flatman (ex-Courtaulds Textiles), has attracted increased backing from Schroders. The investment group, perhaps averaging down, has picked up 4.6 million shares lifting its stake to 19.49 per cent. The price gained 0.5p to 8.25p.

DEREK PAIN stock market reporter of the year and the firming oil price. with turnover, for the second on 12.5p to 541.5p. consecutive trading day, top-Weather forecasts pointing to

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confusion · Cook bid

The bonds that tie low inflation to the information society

between low inflation and Lthe information society? Clearly something has changed in the last few years, for inflation has virtually disappeared in all the main developed countries. The headline figures for inflation at the retail level are in the 0-3 per cent range, but if you allow for improvements in the quality of output and the way people shift their patterns of purchase in response to changes in prices, you can argue that you should knock at least I percentage point off the published inflation figures. If that is right, several countries have already reached price stability and those that haven't are so close it hardly matters.

The most obvious products where prices are stable or falling are those connected with information technology: computers, telecommunications and the like. If you can't afford some equipment, wait a few weeks and it will be bound to be cheaper. As the graph below shows, in the UK the price of computers has fallen by one-third over the last decade though because the weighting. in the producer price index is only 1.3 per cent of the total (which seems astonishingly low) this has not done much to contain the rise in that index.

But, of course, the influence of the information age on the world economy goes far beyond the fall in the price of the kit. So it is an attractive notion to explore the nature of the link between information and inflation. This is the subject of a new paper by David Owen of Kleinwort Benson, the first of a series of long views into the future to be

published by the bank. His thesis runs like this. The development of information technology should be good for world growth and it will tend to go on holding down world prices. But it is one of the forces leading to growth in income differentials in the West, as it enables the people with the most marketable skills to sell their output to a wider global mar-

Ts there a relationship ket, while those with fewer skills find themselves competing against similarly skilled from lower wage economies. One obvious implication for investors is that inflation will stay low; and this will be good for fixed-interest investments.

It is certainly an interesting thesis, but is it right? To some extent it must surely

be valid. The fall in the cost of

computer and telecommunications has a long way to run, for several reasons. These include the probability that the technology of computing will carry on advancing for another couple of decades, maybe longer, the fact that the full decline in the cost of telecommunications that has already taken place has still to be passed through to consumers; the inevitable lag in the sophistication with which we use the new equipment as it becomes available; and the likelihood that better communications will speed up technology transfer in unrelated areas of economic activity, so that good practice in each activity becomes more universally applied.

There is, almost certainly, also some relationship between the rise in income inequality that is taking place and the rise in the need for skills that the information age demands. A vast amount of work has been done on this, particularly in the US fected by the cult of the



Hamish McRae

As more and more services are imported from lower-wage economies the downward pressure on costs will extend

pin down with any precision the connection between the two. For example, the greatest surge in incomes in the US has been in the finance and legal industries, but these have been af-

No inflation in computers

Output price of computer related equipment compared with GDP deflator in UK (Jan 1936=100)

for information skills. True, in theory, the growth of a global media industry has enabled Hollywood film stars to distribute their output more easily to other countries and may have increased their earnings. But a Wall Street corporate financier or a New York lawyer is basically still selling his or her services to the US market. And some of the information technology that has been applied has enabled service industries to use lower-skilled people

than they would have done.

What has, perhaps, had

more impact on widening differentials is the spread of the market economy to low-wage countries, particularly in East Asia. That is, in part, a func-tion of the information boom, but it is more the transfer of practical manufacturing knowhow. A firm in China can buy as good a plant as one in North America, Japan or Europe and maybe buy in the design and marketing skills too. While the number of actual workers displaced in the US, Japan but it remains very difficult to and Europe by such imports is still quite small relative to total employment, the surge in cheap imports has the effect of holding down general price levels, and hence wages, in

the domestic industries. But

then again, the number of ar-

Overall producer price index

lutout price of comoute

celebrity rather than the need eas where imports from East Asia are significant are quite limited. Aside from electronic consumer durables, toys, footwear and some other clothing. and limited imports of cars, the impact of East Asia on prices has been very small. Expect it to grow, but the fall in inflation so far must have other causes.

If, however, one defines the information age more widely to include the impact that the instant information has had on financial markets, then there has been one area where it has already exerted a powerful downward force on all prices: instant high-quality information has surely increased the power of the bond markets, and it is that power which has been the main reason why the inflation

dragon has been slain. Of course the really big question is this. Does the continuing development of information secure this collapse of inflation? I think it will certainly help to do so, for three main reasons. The first is that it will become possible to import more and more on-screen services from lower-wage economies, so that the downward pressure on costs in things like consumer electronics will extend to a range of services, too. You can see this already with activities such as airline accounting being handled in Bombay, or software written in Bangalore.

The second is that the power of the bond markets will be underpinned by the spread of good financial practice by governments around the world, and that spread will itself be encouraged by the increase in information about government behaviour. Governments are being "trained" by the markets to up their performance.

Finally, I suspect the West's ageing voters will become more favourably inclined to low inflation, and will be able to "vote" their preferences in a variety of ways: not just through the ballot box, but also through opinion surveys and most importantly, where they place their own savings.

When the spoon-bender met the soap star

Uri Geller, the well-known spoon bender, has just signed up with William "Coronation Street" Roache's company Mambi, in order to market a board game which Uri claims will improve your psychic powers.

This is the first signing by Mr Roache, who plays Ken Barlow in the long-running northern soap. Mambi is seeking to raise £705,000 on the Ofex market at the end of the month, to fund the development of more celebrity-

related board games. Uri tells me: "I've been roaming the world for the last 30 years demonstrating my (paranormal) powers on stage and in laboratories. I've always been interested in psychic games, but never thought about producing one until I met William Roache a year ago."

The two bumped into each other at a computer exhibition - Uri has his own web

"I don't watch soap operas, but I asked someone who he was," Uri says. The spoon-bender was much keener to join a small "family" company than a large impersonal corporation.

Uri adds he can't decide whether to call the game "Psychic" or "Paranormalist" or something else again. The game will enhance people's ESP. I believe everyone bas paranormal powers, they just don't realise it."

So when will the game be launched? Strangely for a man of such psychic powers, Uri doesn't know: "That's a technical question. You better ask the people at Mambi that." Hang on a minute, I'll just consult my crystal ball...

If you hear pounding rock music emanating from the offices of the normally staid City law firm Travers Smith Braithwaite, it will be because one of its finance lawyers. Neil Murray, has just released a second album.

Mr Murray is a rock musician in his spare time, and has teamed up with Mark

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



(from left): Uri Geller with Bill Roache and Brian Hicks, Mambi's finance director-

Millin of Slaughter & May (drums) and Kevin Duncan, recently of advertising agency Lowe Howard Spink (bass), who are collectively

called The Hamptons. The group has just released an intriguing CD titled Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba. Appropriately enough it has a picture of two sheep on the cover. Sadly I naven't had time to listen to it, although one of my colleagues described Mr Murray's last recording, Return to Malibu,

as sounding like "David Bowie imitating the Beatles". Here's a selection of lyrics from the title song of the new album: "Ba ba ba ba ba / I'm not getting / Fa fa fa fa fa / We should be singing / La la la la / But all I get is / Ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba

Remember, you heard it here first.

Roger Lewis, a former head of music at Radio One, has just been poached from EMI Records UK to become president of Decca Records, the London based music company. Perhaps Mr Lewis can be persuaded to sign up Mr Neil?

Chris Roberts, president of PolyGram Classics and Jazz. He succeeds Roland Konmerell, who retired from Decca at the end of last year

after 10 years as president.
Mr Lewis himself says: "I have watched with admiration how the Decca team have positioned the Decca/London, L'Oisean-Lyre and Argo labels at the forefront of artistic, technical and marketing excellence. and innovation."

After three years at Radio One Mr Lewis joined EMI in 1990 as director of its classical division. While at EMI he helped in the marketing of such popular collections as Canto Gregoriano. The Best Classical Album... Ever and Classical Moods. In an echo of his Radio One career, Mr Lewis was also responsible for the Trainspotting soundtrack, EMI's best-selling new

release last year. One thing he won't want to dwell on. It was Decca, of course, that turned down the Beatles in 1962, leaving the way clear for the Fab Four to. make staggering amounts of money for EMI, Mr Lewis's old company.

John Willcock Mr Lewis will report to Industrial Metals LME Species **Precious Metals** 36350 12225 47600 35960 217,55 73,5 284,25 215,11 359/370-215/222 83/93 50/56 362/379-217/227 Agricultural LIFFE Shorms HHo 300.00 29950 29910 n/a Other Softs

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12.40 1490 NOVICE | ATHERIAND MODES IN THE STATE OF THE S

1.10 PENHICK NOVICE Penait, Value £2,7 Min watering de P

CARLISLE 1230 Cumbrian Maestro 10 Son Of Anshan 2.00 Stormy (mb) 3.00 Jymjam Johnny 3.

RIMERED FIRST TIME: None RIMERED FIRST TIME: None RIMED THE LAST SEVEN DAY LIMEDISTANCE RUNNERS: New In State of the Parkets of the Parkets Live 12.30 SEAN GRAHAM (CLASS E) (DIV I) BULLERADO E) (DIV I) :
CAVERAGO (42) EF AME
CAVERAGO (42) EF AME
DON'T TELL TON (26) AME
DON'T TELL TO

LINGFIELD 20 Quiet Arch 1.50 Persia BROADGATE FLYER (nap) 2.50 Cay 3.50 E Cay 3.50 Forgotten Times



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John Willow als · • · -

GREG WOOD The only good thing about a mid-season cold snap is that, once it has been endured, punters are fully rewarded for their patience. As the prefix on temperatures changed from negative to positive yesterday, the entries arrived for Saturday's meetings at Kempton and Haydock, and certainly made appetising reading for anyone who has endured the recent starvation diet of all-weather Flat racing.

Racing

Even an event like Haydock's Peter Marsh Chase, which rarely attracts a field of more than half a dozen, found itself with 21 prospective runners, and the vital Festival preliminaries may at last be allowed to begin. With trainers desperate to run their best horses, caution is a hutury which few can afford, and Jodami, Belmont King, Paul Nicholls's Rehearsal Chase winner, and Unguided Missile are all intended runners.

The card at Haydock also includes the Champion Hurdle

trial, with 16 entries including their 3-1 favourite, with Storm hard task," David Nicholson, his Collier Bay, the current cham- Alert and Big Matt (both of trainer, said yesterday, "but pion and ante-post favourite to whom might have been happi- he's got to run somewhere." remain so come March, Right er at Ascot) next in the market Adrian Maguire will ride the Win, Dato Star and Relkeel, at 4-1 and 5-1 respectively. former two-mile champion, who would be running for the first time in two years.

Collier Bay, however, may yet be diverted to Leopardstown for the Irish Champion Hurdle on Sunday, a race he won last year.

At Kempton, the Lanzarote feature event by the Victor Chandler Chase, re-routed from Ascot last Saturday. Eleven runners were declared yesterday, and Ladbrokes immediately installed Ask Tom as

in the Carrick Hill Handicap

Chase at Punchestown yester-

day, bounced back with a su-

perbly timed run to victory on

board the favourite, Caitriona's

Choice, in the Pairyland Hand-

Hurdle will be displaced as the Viking Flagship, who will carry top weight, is also a 5-1 chance, and the firm then bet: 9-1 Kibreet and Time Won't Wait, 10-1 Dancing Paddy and

when he partners Merry Gale at

Leopardstown on Sunday.

Lord Dorcet, 16-1 bar.

his lower back.

NAP: Sudden Spin

(Carlisle 3.30)

NB: Ali's Alibi

while Richard Johnson will partner Nicholson's second RICHARD FOMONDSON runner, Storm Alert. Several of the Victor Chandier field also also feature in bet-

ting released by the Tote yesterday on the Queen Moth-(Carlisle 2.00) er Champion Chase at Cheltenham, for which 18 names were put forward. Viking Flagship is rated the 4-1 joint second-favourite along with Sound Man, behind the 3-1

"Viking Flagship has got a pion, Klairon Davis, with Ask

Dunwoody rolls with Punchestown pendulum Richard Dunwoody, shaken by pion gave up a later engagement analysis of the urine taken from a heavy fall from Edenakill Lad in the novices' chase, as he was the horse Anthony Bell at Hexciplinary Committee.

suffering pain from a muscle in ham on 4 October has confirmed the presence of Flunixin, a pro-Dunwoody will be in action in hibited substance. The horse is the same Herb Stanley colours trained by Tim Carr at Great Ayton. The finding was confirmed by the Hong Kong Racing Lab-The Horseracing Forensic oratory, who performed the However, the former cham- Laboratory has reported that the counter analysis. An enquiry will

favourite and defending cham-

be held by the Jockey Club's Dis-

The most interesting entry for

the race, however, is One Man,

the King George VI Chase winner. Gordon Richards's

chaser is not quoted by the Tote,

who consider him a doubtful

entries is further evidence that

his Gold Cup credentials.

Richards is unconvinced about

"The thinking is that I've got to wait until he's run in the Piller

Chase [over the Gold Cup course] on Saturday week,"

Richards said yesterday. "If he

didn't win that I'd have to

think twice about the Gold

صكذا من الاجل

Bookmakers are to change the way in which they calculate the computer straight forecast. The majority of dividends will change only slightly, but the overall effect will be a rise in the average return of 0.3% from £45.93 to £46.07.

One Man given Cheltenham option Tom next in the list at 7-1, Cup, and then if I think he

go 10-1

Martha's Son on 10-1, and 12-1 doesn't like Cheltenham, he won't go for either race and I'll transfer him to Aintree. He's a very good horse, we all know that, but the times he's been to Cheltenham, it just hasn't been The Piller Chase will thus be

runner, but his presence in the one of the most significant Festival trials of all, and if One Man fails the test, it is unlikely to be for lack of fitness. "He's in good form," Richards said, "it's been difficult to keep him going but it shouldn't matter because he was race-fit just over three weeks ago for the King George so it will take nothing to bring him back." Even if One Man fails to

make it to the start at Cheltenham in March, Richards is in the happy position of being able to field some able deputies. since Addington Boy, Unguided Missile and The Grey Monk are all intended runners in the Gold Cup. Unguided Missile, the subject of steady support in recent days, was backed again with William Hill yesterday and is now 20-1 (from 25-1) for the Festival's most important prize.

RACING'S FUTURES MARKET

Bookmakers' ante-post lists are racing's futures market. Read- Action is 7-1 (William Hill ers can catch up with the latest and the Tote) - Ladbrokes go developments - best prices are 5-1. in bold - in this sphere with The Tote Gold Trophy Handicap

Hurdle: Bimsey is a top-priced 14-1 with the Tote - William Hill

Champion Hurdle: Large

Triumph Hurdle: Far Dawn Independent's Tuesday service. is 25-1 (Tote) - Coral go 14-1. Cheltenham Gold Cup Chase: One Man is 8-1 (Tote) - Coral and William Hill go o-1.

sport

Tote Gold Trophy Handic		
Penny A Day (Mrs M Reveley10s(2(b)	William Hill	<u></u>
Make A Stand (M Pros/95111h)	5-1	6
Storm Demage (P Nicholis/1(Ist1lb)	12-1	
Zabadi (D Nicholson/10st8tb)	<u>12.1</u>	12
Birmsey /R Akehursi/10st11/bi	12-1	11
Castle Sweep (D Nichalson/11st)	10-1	14
Data Star (J M Jefferson/10st13b)	14-1	14
Escartefigue (D Nicholson/11st1tb)	12-1	14
Mister Moroee (N Twiston-Davies/10st3lb)	11	
Executive Design (Mrs M Recis/Ser12b)	12-1	14
Indefence (Mrs J Primary/10ss8b)	18-1	16
Large Action (O Sherwood/12st)	15-1	14
Mistinguett (N Twiston-Davies/95213/b)		
Romancer (N Twiston-Davies-10st4lb)	14·1	16
Chery's Lad (N Henderson/10st1lb)	<u>16-1</u>	16
Clifton Beat (P Hobbs/10st6tb)	20-1	
Edelmeiss Du Moulin (F Murphy 9sreib)	20-1	16
Esideno Nel (J Spearing/10st)	20-1 20-1	
Family Way (A L T Moore/10st)		
Paddy's Roturn (F Murphy/10st6th)	20-1	
Pridwell (M Pipe/11st8b)	20-1	16
Silver Groom (R Aleshurs/10st2in)	20-1	
Tibetan (Lady Herries/9st11b)	20_1 20-1	20
Cadougold (M Pipe/9st9tp)		
Chief's Song (S Dow/10st1lb)	20-1	25
Direct Roote (J H Johnson/9sr12to)	20-1	
Prognarch (R Philips/9s/9b)	<u>25-1</u>	20
Hatta Breeze (D Nicholson/9:(58))	<u>25-1</u>	25
Klispindle (A L T Moore/Ssz11ib)	25-1	16
Klassair (N Henderson/9sz13th)	<u>25-1</u>	
Nilmegen (J FizGerald/9s/Stb)	<u>25-1</u>	
Roll a Dollar (D Elswerth/9stolb)	20-1	25
Tom Bradle (J H Johnson/SstSib)	25-1	
	<u>25-1</u>	25
Abbey Street (0 Sherwood/9sr1ib)	33-1	
Angelo's Double (R Buckler/9s:10lb)	33-1	25
Ashwell Boy (P Hobbs/10s:11b)		25
Chaptrassi (M Pipe/9sr)	33-1	
Charming Girl (O Sherwood/9st86)	33-1	
Dr Leunt (P Hobbs/9s;13b)	33-1	33
Hamilton Silk (P Ppe/9stSib)	33-1	
Kingdom Of Shades (A Turnel/9s/3lb)	33-1	
Lightening Lad (J King/9s/7lb)	<u>25-1</u>	
Marchant Ming (M Harramond/9s(9b)	25-1	
Muse (D Elsworth/10st8ts)	33-1	
Potentale (M Pipe/9s/3lb)	33-1	
Kippenour (C MannyBstBib)	50-1	
Yet Again (G Kelisusy/7st5lb)	50-1	50
Internação (J Fox/8s(4lb)	65-1	50
Decide Yourself (I Thomson Jones/893)	100-1	66
Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2,	3. 4 (Newbury, Saturday,	8 February

Champion Hurdle (2m 110yds)						
Horse (Tramer)	lorse (Tramer) Coral William Hill Ladbrokes					
Collier Bay (J Old)	7-2	3-1	7-2_	7-2		
Large Action (O Sherwood)	11-2	7-1	5-1	7- <u>1</u>		
Space Trucker (Mrs J Harrington)	7-1	7-1	6-1	8-1		
Escartefigue (D Nicholson)	12-1	10-1	12-1	10-1		
Dato Star (J M Jefferson)	12-1	12-1	12-1	14-1		
Senmertino (D Nicholson)	10-1	doubtiul	14-1	12-1		
Castle Sweep (D Nicholson)	16-1	16-1	12-1	14-1		
Bimsey (R Akehurst)	14-1	20-1	16-1	14-1		
I'm Supposin (K Prendergass)	20-1	<u>1</u> 6-1	16-1	14-1		
Relieel (D Nicholson)	20-1	20-1	14-1	14-1		
Urubasda (A O'Bnen)	20-1	20-1	14-1	14-1		
Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Cheltenham, Tuesday, 11 March)						

Triumph Hurdle (2m 1f)				
Horse (Trainer)	Coral	William Hill	Ladbrokes	Tote
Namoodal (D Nicholson)	16-1	14-1	12-1	<u> 14-1</u>
Shooting Light (P Murphy)	20-1	14-1	14-1_	14-1
Soldet (D Nicholson)	16-1	16-1	20-1	14-1
White See (M Pipe)	16-1	20-1	16-1	20-1
Fer Davis (Mrs A.) Perrett)	14-1	16-1	16-1	<u> 25-1</u>
Blurred (M Tomplins)	33-1	33-1	33-1_	33-1
Circus Star (D Nicholson)	33-1	33-1	33-1	33-1
Disallowed (Miss H Knight)	25-1	33-1	25-1	25-1
Serenus (N Henderson)	20-1	33-1	25-1	33-1
She Gas (O Sherwood)	25-1	25-1	25-1	33-1
Porname Secret (M Prps)	25-1	50-1	33-1_	25 <u>:1</u>
Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Cheltenham, Thursday, 13 March)				Viarch)

Horse (Trainer)	Coral	William Hill	Ladbrokes	Tot
Imperial Call (F Sytherland)	9-2	7-2	4-1_	7-
Cooppe Hill (W Dennis)	7-1	8-1	7-1	
One Man (G Richards)	6-1	<u>- 6-1</u>	7-1	8-
Rough Quest (T Casey)	8-1	8-1	8-1_	8-
Addington Boy (G Richards)	12-1	14-1	12-1	14-
Dorace Pride (M Hourigan)	14-1	16-1	12-1	1.6-
The Grey Monk (G Richards)	16-1	14-1	12-1_	18-
Mr Mulligen (N Chence)	16-1	14-1	14-1	16-
Nakthen Lad (Mrs. J. Peman)	16-1	16-1	14-1	20-
Banjo (D Nicholson)	25-1	20-1	16:1	25-
Danoil (T Foley)	20-1	16-1	20-1	25-
Magnur (T Forster)	20-1	25-1	25-1	25-
Linguided Missile (G Richards)	20-1	20-1	25-1	25-
Challenger Du Luc (M Pice)	20-1	33-1	33-1	33-

3.85: 1. GULF SHAADI (S Drowne) 9-4: SOUTHWELL

3.55.1 CHLP SHADE IS Drowney 9-4:
12.55.1 CHADLEIGH LANE IF Lynch) 6-1:
Innotes 11-4 ft-fay 3. The Barnsley Belle
1 10 ran. 11-4 ft-fay Down The Yard (6th).
1 (R Holmshead, Upper Longton). Totas:
150: £1.50. £1.10. £2.70. DF: £14.80. 12.55: 1. CHADLEIGH LANE (F Lynch) 6-1;
2. Nandra 11-4, f-fay, 3. The Barnstey Belle
6-1. 10 zen. 11-4, f-fay 3. Down The Yard (6th),
5. 1. (R Holinshead, Upper Longdon), Tota:
10.50; £1.50, £1.10, £2.70. DF: £1.480.
CSF: £21.07. Tricast: £98.04. Tric £29.30.
1.28: 1. RAFFLES ROOSTER Up Huyrami
5-2 fay, 2. Acentus Dudels 68-1; 3. Tosiston Lady 16-1: 4. Mustang 12-1. 17 dan.
1½, 4. (A Newcombe, Barnsteple). Tota:
£5.10; £1.10, £26.30, £8.20, £3.70. DF:
£442.10. CSF: £1.43.92. Tricast: £2.227.05.
Tric: £1.134.70.
1.65: £1. JIBEREEN (D Hariston) 5-2 fay:
2. Afann 14-1: 3. Botd Aristocrat 7-1. B

THE INDEPENDENT RACING SERVICES 0891 261 + LEICESTER CARLISLE LINGFIELD

Jackpot: Not won, Pool of £58,629.63 car-ned forward to Carisle today. Placepot: £61.30. Quadpot: £14.60.

Place 8: £42,64, Place 5: £25.55.

LEICESTER

12.40 Korbell 1.10 Tompetoo 140 Garnwin 2.10 Amancio

2.40 Destin D'Estruval 3.10 Wisley Wonder 3.40 Colwall

icap Hurdle.

GOING: Hurdles - Good to Soft; Chases - Good to Firm.

Right-hand, undulating course. Run-in of 250yds.

Course is 2m SE of city off A6. Leicester station (London, St Pancras - Sheffield line)
2m. ADMISSION: Club £12; Tattersalls £8; Silver Ring £4. (accompanied under-16s free).

Free racceards. CAR PARK: Free. Silver Ring Car Park - £12 admits cit & four occupants.

12.40 LYRIC NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV I) £2,425 added

ı	_		
ł	1	F32-212	FLYING GURBLER (53) (D) (BF) (Mrs R J Sten) D Nicholson 6 11 4
1	2	30 1442	HAND WOMEN (45) (BF) (M Archer & Mass J Broadhurst) N T-Course 5 11 4 C Lieuwillyn
ı	3		SUTHERLAND MOSS (35) (C E Wheeley) T Tale 6 11 4
ı	4	46003	ADIB (USA) (34) (N 8 Mason (Farms) Ltd) G M Moore 7 10 12 Callaghan
ı	5	50	BURFORDS FOR SCRAP (43) (H Burbox) R Dickin 5 10 12
ı	6	454	CYPRESS AVENUE (32) (YGB Pagneship) Mrs V Word 5 10 12
ı	7	520-0	HELS GAMBLE (62) John Hill P Baren 7 10 12
ı	8		JOBSASCODUN (46) (D J W Ross) N Henderson 8 10 12
ı	9	0	KYLE DAVED (74) (Supergreet Ind & Farm Buildings Ltd) F Jordan 5 10 12
ł	10.		MUSIC MASTER (318) (M ET Daves) C Egenon 7 10 12 Osborne
ı	11	OPF50/-0	MORDIC FLIGHT (25) (Lyonshall Racing) R Eddey 9 10 12
ı	12	215	QUBBLE EASILE (FR) (39) (B A Kilipantsk) M Pipe 5 10 12C Mande
ı	13	0-80	ROSSELL ISLAND (33) (Robert & Bizabeth Historial Mrs.) Pitmen 6 10 12
ı	14		SERGERUT MAY IMIS C A Coveru) Mrs C Coveru 7 10 12
ł	15		SOMEREIGN PASS (The Welburn Reign Society) R Woodhouse 5 10 12 D Gallegber
ŀ	16		GECAN'S GRIL (29) (Beskerville Racing Club) R Brotherton 7 10 7 L Hervey
I	17	2	KORBELL (36) (K.) Michell) P Nicholis & 10 7
ı			and the state of t

- 17 deciared BETTING: 11-4 Flying Gusner, 7-2 Hand Woven, 5-1 Sutherland Wosa, 5-1 Korbell, 12-1 Johnsghot
14-1 Quini Engle, 15-1 Adib, 20-1 others

FORM GUIDE

NORBELL will take the beating. She made an encouraging hurdling debut when running Dantes Cavalier to haif a length at Follestone (2m 671.10)day last month with the third ten lengths back. Flying Gusiner easily landed the odds over today's marathon trip at Chepstow but found Carolie's Crusader nine lengths too good at Ascot last time. Hend Wovea was four lengths second to Agistment over today's journey at Newcastle and that winner went on to master Mightly Moss at Uttowater. Sattherland Moss's five-length Sedgafield victory over an extended two makes five on his hurdling low does not measure up to the form of the other than marking that he is hound to morress.

1.10 PENWICK NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,925 added 2m Penalty Value £2,726

1	P-10	HON WARRIOR (20) (D) (D F Allocri C Brooks & 11 11
2	503-51	TOMPETOO (38) (D) (Tom Petofer Ltd) N Twiston-Davies 6 11 11
3		AVAINTI EXPRESS (396) (Mrs Sarah Stavens) C Exerton 7 11 5
4	00P3-6	BROWN AND MELD (70) (C W Cooper) Miss A Erromots 6 11 5 Ryan
5		CADES BAY (36) (R D Russell) N Trusson-Davies 6 11 5D Bidgistles
6	-0-	COTTESMORE (279) (S.N.) Embirgos) Miss A Embirgos 6 11 5
7		JUST BRUCE (220) (A M Heath) Nas E Heath 8 11 5 D Gallaghe
ė	5.54	LABURAUM GOLD (59) (A Keplan and R & D Johnson) Mrs J Promen 6 11.5 R Farrant
ğ	53	MACZENAH (35) (Mrs R A Smath) R Curts 6 11 5
血	10454	MORPHEUS (787) Dates M A Powisi D Nicholson 8 11 5
ū	70.14	NEVER TIME (Mrs Andrea M Malinson) Mrs V Acordey 5 11 5
ű	p.	SERIOUS OPTION (411) (Mrs R A Smith) R Curts 6 11 5
13	1-4	SELVER THYNE (66) (86) (Robert & Elizabeth Histories) Mis.) Person 5 11 5 W Manston
14	- 1	TROAL FORCE (76) (an S Stees) P Hobbs 6 11 5
15	÷	TOOD (USA) (82) (A H Henry) A Havey S 11.5 A McCarting
抠	าเรื	TRISTRANT'S MAGE (NZ) (45) (BF) (\$ Keeling) N Henderson 6 11 5
17	20	FRACTIASY LINE (34) DAIS P Startes P Webber 6 11 0
ĭВ	30	ME FORD SQUIRD (Nes Kerole Venn) P Hobbs 4 10 7R Duterood)
19	•	GAUTRY HENPECKED (41) (LN P Racne) G M Moore 4 10 2
20		
20	ī	ROYAL DIVERSION (38) (88) (R Green Fine Paintings) M Pipe 4 10 2

FORM GUIDE

A four-length lifth behind useful Aenon at Newbury in November on his first outing since last February, TOMPETOO romped to a 10-length Chipscrow victory five weeks ago. There is better still to come from Nagel Twiston-Dewel's five-year-old and he can supplement the gains. Silver Tityrine, a Newton Abbot bumper scorer on his only start last term, and Revall be wanted in their jumping bows but they finished a well beaten fourth — Silver Tityrine behind Mazzani on their jumping bows but they finished a well beaten fourth — Silver Tityrine behind Mazzani at Wincamon in November and Royal Diversion in Red Raja's race at Folkestonive lest month. They will need to leave that running a long way behind to figure here. Tompetod's bugitest heal could be jumping debutari. Tidal Force, who comfortably justified favouritism in a Chellenthem bumper at the and of October on his single start so it and will have been well schooled for this. Avantil Express, a five-length second to Ebullient Equiname at Hereford 13 monthis ago on hist only run so far, could pose a threat if fit.

Selection: TOMPETOO

1.40 DANNY NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,075 added 2m 4f 110yds Penalty Value £3,058

1 1552-43 HAURTING MUSIC (SG) (Fon Miler) Mis A Peristi 9 12 0 R. Demwoody
6515-FD ASLAN (29) (B. Mis Reymond Anderson Green) J Fedéraid 9 11 4 Milliamson
3 5014-83 GARMWIN (27) (Poncer Hear-Treatment) N Hendenton 7 11 4 Milliamson
21 1155F MORRING VALLEY (CS), (EF) (Pond House Recing M Pipe 5 10 9 AP MicCoy
5 P2239-4 ROVER RED (SQ), (Finst) K Finst 11 10 0 PM Hot Lougdillo
6 0044-0F ROMANS GLEN (24), (Mrs W Morrel) M Williamson 8 10 0 RS Supple
7 600 SMART CASANOVA (57) (C) Counge) M Williamson 8 10 0 Milliamson
8 4442/P GEPSY RMINELER (803) (Mrs Margaral Underwood) P Bean 12 10 0 W Worthington
Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: River Red 9st 11lb, Romens Gien 9st 9th, Smart Casanova
8st 11lb, Glosy Rembier 8st 11lb.

Asian, a bumper and hurdles winner in his younger days, felt in his first three chases and held a clear lead only to refuse behind Garbo's Boy at Newcastie last month. He has the ability to win a semilar contest but is unreliable and GaRNNess is preferred. Nick Henderson's seven-year-old, who won over hurdles at Aintree in May, was brought down at the first on his chasing debut. Buckhouse Boy's race at Newbury and will have learned from his ten-length third behind Around The Gale at Bangor. Hausting Mesic won a bumper and a hurdle tace in lestend last season and did not do badly on his chasing debut when fourth to Missey Dram over motive; the rid not appear in stay the Misser Drum over today's trip at Huntington in November. He did not appear to stay the three and a quarter miles when a remote third behind Little Martina at Folkestone and will do better back now he reverts to this shorter distance. Nordic Vailley, the epitome of con-sistency over timber last term when he went in the times, ran well in his list file chases, being placed three times before sconing times at Exeter. He has lost his way in his last three starts with a couple of fails at Tauriton and an unplaced run in between but could go close of back near his heef.

2.10 MADERIA QUEEN NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,075 added 2m 1f Penalty Value £2,902

1 5-P2PP1 CAPTAIN STOCKFORD (25) (P Wegmann) P Wegmann 10 11 9. PJA344 DEGYBORS (FR) (Z7) (Teny Neith M Pipe 5 11 9 AP McChy (100P-P ALICAT (ES) (J W P Curis J Curis 6 11 3 Derek Byrase 1022-22 AMANCIO (USA) (SS) (SF) (Paul H Locke) Mcs. A Perett 6 11 3 R Demondry 0-0P MR MOTIVATOR (SS) (N 7 Gestral T Keddy 7 11 3 S Media

FORM GLIDE

AMANCIO should outgun these. Amanda Penettis so-year-old, winner of the Impenal Cup last season, has finished runner-up in both his chases - behind Land Afar at Kempton and Aardwolf at Sandown and has much less to do this time. Martin Pipe's Freich Import Decyborg, a winner at Le Touquet in July, will be the better for his Bangor run and looks the right one for the forecast. Capitals Stockford, having been pulsed up three times from four preceding starts this season, was a 33-1 shot at Hereford just before Christmes but got home by four lengths and so from the market leaders Scottish Bambi and Northern Singer. However, his task was greatly simplified when The Wayward Bahop tell two out and the form close not amount to much.

Selections AMANCIO

2.40 LYRIC NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV II) £2,425 added 3m Penalty Value £2,019

Gysart showed much improved form over hurdles when fitted with blinkers, landing his last four races of 1995-96 and his opening outing at Wincarrion, following with a third to Olympian and subsequent scorer Ocean Hawk at Ascot, beaten a neck and a head after making most. Starting at 8-15 for his fencing debut at Wanwick in one of the westest novice events seen all season, he duly obliged — but only thanks to a recovery by Norman Williamson after the seven-year-old all but fell three out. He might well go in again here but DROMHANA might prove just too good. Dromharia, an hish point-to-point winner, made a successful changing low at Wanwick and was beaten a length and threequarters by previous winner Good Speed You at Ludlow with the third 24 lengths every. Wistey Wonder, who did well over hurdles test season, has been disappointing over fences but is in first-time blinkers and should make a bold bid for his first success over the major obstacles. Peanscaller, who showed ability without winning over trober last season, fell at the first at Poliestone last month on his first outing over fences but looks the sort to do well at this game.

Selection: DROMHANA

3.40 MAJOR LEAGUE NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,925 added 2m 4f 110yds Penalty Value £2,474 331113 GENERAL MOUNTAR (35) (BF) (A 5 Helels) M Pice 7 12 0 UF118-1 LANCE ARRISTRONG (41) (D) (6 L Poner) G McCourt 7 11 12 U693-22 SUPPREME GENOTIN (27) (BF) (W E Surt) J Old 3 11 8 U718-22 SUPPREME GENOTIN (27) (BF) (W E Surt) J Old 3 11 8 U718-23 (BF) (BF) (W E Surt) J Old 3 11 8 U718-23 (BF) (BF) (W E Surt) J Old 3 11 8 U718-23 (BF) (W E Surt) J Old 3 11 8 U718-23 (BF) (W E Surt) J Old 3 11 8 U718-23 (BF) (W E SURT) J OLD 3 U718-23 (BF) U718-

Boots Madden has a 1,00 per cent record after three runs - two bumpers a a hurdle race - but seems likely to meet his match here in DESTRIVAL David Nicholson's charge, a winner over fences in his native France, had the misfortune to take on Grand National war-

a winner over fences in his native France, had the misfortune to take on Grand National winner Rough Quest on his British debut in a smallar event to this at Folkestine (20 Mati-10)/dish four weeks ago but ran a blinder to be beaten only half a length with the third 25 lengths admit. He jumps and stays well and this trip will be just right. Misendip Prince was racing for the first time in ten mortitis when taking the manor placing against easy winner Fying Guiner over this journey at Chepstow in November. Young Kenny, who won over three and a quarter at Carmel last season, finished unplaced on his return and failed to complete in his next to outlings but ran mind to Southern Nights at Towester and was runner-up to Menshaar at Hexham. He gets the trip well and looks best of the others, So Far So Bold had useful form over fences when trained by Francis Doumen last term but has not been out since being beaten half a length by Besurepane in a three-runner race at Warwick 11 months ago.

3.10 THUNDERBOLT NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,075 added 3m Penalty Value £3,162

= 9 occaron = BETTONE: 4-5 Gysart, 9-4 Wisley Wuxder, 7-1 Key To Moyade, 8-1 Dromiseas, 16-1 Penncaler, 25-Curowafeliou, 33-1 others

— 16 declared — Lénionum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: Misch Triel Set 13th, Time Leeder Set 12th, Carly-J Set 10th, Dishen Jan 984 40.

BETTING: 9-2 General Moulder, 5-1 Supreme Genetic, 11-2 Lance Amestrong, 7-1 Melstock Mag-gia, 10-1 Lough Tully, Rovestor, Mahler, 12-1 others

LANCE ARMISTRONG ended last season with chase victories at Windsor and Plumpton and had been off the course since Merch when landing the odds in a novices' hurdle at Southwell six weeks ago on only his second appearance over timber, Carbarn McCourts charge gets weight from only one of his 15 fivels here but is a progressive type and, eithough it will be much bugher than last time, he is still fancied to follow up with Adrian Maguire again in the saddle. Supreme Genotion has finished number up in both his races this season, bestthe saddle. Supreme Genodin has finished numer-up in both his races this Season, best-en a length and threequarters by Bouciffe Court et. Chepstow and six lengths by Cool Gun-ner in a nowless handloop at Exeter, and can again reach a piace. General Monitar goes well for Tony McCoy and was completing a hist-ond, when three lengths too good for Jack-son First under a 7th penalty at Folkestone last month. Turned out again at Plumpton the following day, he falled to run up to his best, firsting a nine-length thrift to is issued to ones here fresh after a five-week break. Melistock Megglewes successful in her first own outlings this season, a bumper at Hereford and a hundle race at Worcester, following with a cred-table thrift to the useful Potters Gale at this track. She will be studed by the step up in dis-tance and can make her presence felt in her first venture in a handleap. Mealter delect top weight in a week contest at Hereford just before Christines, beating Colwell two and a half lengths and should confirm the form on 3th worse terms. Both easily hold Time Leader (fifth).

	14
CARLISE	BETT Choi
HYPERION	
12.30 Cumbrian Maestro 1.00 Ansuro Again 1.30 Son Of Anshan 2.00 Stormy Coral 2.30 New Inn	1
(nb) 3.00 Jymjam Johnny 3.30 Sudden Spin	1
GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places on hurdles course).	'

GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places on hurdles course).

Right-hand, undularing course. Run-in of 250yds.

Course is on southern ounders of town, 4m W of junction 42 of M6. Buses from Carlisle station 2m. ADMISSION: Club £12 (OAPs & under-21s £9); Tattersals £6 (OAPs & under-21s £9); Tattersals £6 (OAPs & under-21s £5). CAR PARK: On rails £3 (Including occupants); remainder free.

BLINKERRD FIRST TIME: None.
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS; None.
LONG-DISTANCE FUNNERS: New Inn (2.30) has been sent 190
miles by S Gollings from Scamblesby, Lires.

12.30 SEAN GRAHAM NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV I) £2,500 2m 1fT Reed B Storey

~ 14 decigned ~ TINGs. 4-1 Quango, 5-1 Combrine Meastro, 7-1 Cimering, 8-1 Hobbs sice, 12-1 Dun't Tell Tom, Meadow Bee, Buttervick King, 14-1 others .00 SEAN GRAHAM NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 3m

- 16 declared -BETING: 4-1 Assuro Agalu, 6-1 For Cathal, 7-1 Cool Weather, 8-1 Naughty Fabre, 10-1 Ratisferdon, Misurica, 12-1 others

1.30 SEAN GRAHAM NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV II) £2.500 added 2m 1f 21A SHOOMMEN (31) (BF) Mrs M Receip 5 11 12 Pilvon B
150-631 QATTARA (25) W McKeown 7 11 12 G Calabi
030-236 GOLF LAND (80) (BF) L Lung 5 11 5 A Thombos
0 HANK HALL BOY (42) F Marken 6 11 5 A DobbiaA Thorston 0 HANK HILL BOY (42) F MATEST 6 11 5 0-FOF LARRIOW (27) Mrs A Naughton 6 11 5 0 MONTEN (26) 5 Leadbater 6 11 5...

00- TSAMEA (276) 6 M Moore 5 11 5 _______ Al Bentley 4805- BAREFOOT LANDING BLEA (270) C Parker 6 11 0 _____ Parker PSF5-00 COQUET GOLD (62) F Welton 6 11 0 ______ M Johnson

200 SEAN GRAHAM HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS B) £10,000 added 3m - 5 declared -BETTHRS: 3-1 Storay Coral, AIPs Aibl, 7-2 Astings, Utu Val, 6-1 Pennine

2.30 SEAN GRAHAM HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS C) £4,850 added 2m 1f 4513-46 CHTMDBNO (45) C Thorson 7 10 4 ______M Foster 2/31524 RMI 6380 (255) P Monteth 8 10 0 ______ A Debbis

- 8 deci - 6 declared - 7 d

1134-34 SOLBA (USA) (27) (D) C Paner 8 11 13... 23/73-64 ANOTHER VENTURE (\$5) F Murphy 7 10 8 3.30 SEAN GRAHAM BOOKMAKERS HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £3,650 2m 4f 110yds

3.00 SEAN GRAHAM BOOKMAKERS HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 2m 4f 110yds

13/5U22- POPESHMLL (282) (D) Mass S Williamson 10 12 0.....

um weight: 10st., True handicap weights: Nicholae Plant 9st 13th, Dan-Dys Gossa 9st 77b. SETTING: 4-1 Links, 5-1 Locknangmin, 6-1 Transp. Peop O Day, 8-1 Sudden Spin, 10-1 Thoroday Night, 12-1 others

ENCFED

1.20 Quiet Arch 1.50 Persian Conquest 2.20 BROADGATE FLYER (nap) 2.50 Sihafi 3.20 Misty Cay 3.50 Forgotten Times

GOING: Standard.

STALLS: 51 & 1m - outside; remainder - inside.

STALLS: 51 & 1m - outside; remainder - inside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE: low for 51 & 61.

Equirack surface; left-hand, sharp uncholating course.

Equirack surface; left-hand, sharp uncholating course.

Course is SE of town on E2028. Lingfield station adjoins of Course is SE of town on E2028. Lingfield station adjoins of Course is SE of town on E2028. Lingfield station adjoins of Course is SE of town on E2028. Lingfield station adjoins of Course is SE of town on E2028.

BLINEREED FIRST TIME: Distant Dynasty (visored) (2.50); Logic Pert Lad (visored), Sileat Weapon (3.50).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Misty Cay (3.20) won

here on Tuesday.

LONG-DISTANCE EUNNERS: Strain Casino Lad (2:20), Glove
LONG-DISTANCE EUNNERS: 12 50), here been sent 370 rolles Trotter (3.20) & Come Dancing (3.50) have been sent 270 miles by M Johnston from Middletum, N Yorks, Sharif (2.50) sent 246 miles 1.20 NEWPORT APPRENTICE HANDICAP (CLASS F) £3,300 added 1m 2f

1 011005 MASTER BENELED (15) (C) (D) P 0 Bars 7 9 13

- 7 decimed BETTING: G-4 Master Beveled, 9-4 Quiet Arch, 6-1 Private Fetture, 8-1 in
Cuboots, 10-1 Street Harrow, 14-1 Zamelek, 16-1 Sweet Ambret

1.50 YARMOUTH CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS E) £4,025 added 1m 5f 50605-2 PREMER LEARME (12) Llong 7 9 6. Leese Long 3
300500 CHEZ CATRLAN (25) (D) R Alebura 6 9 4 ___ S. Sanders 2 B
005103- PERSAN CONQUEST (15) (C) R Rigam 5 9 4 ___ Weaver 1 B
00000-4 HEDAR EXPESS (2) Mr. 1, Subbs 5 8 12 ___ T Symba 4 8
AV DESISEAY (711) J Budge 9 8 10 ___ A Duly (5) 6 B
45600 TAMANDU (50) C Lenes 7 8 9 ____ C Robber 5

- 6 declared -SETTAND: 6-4 Persian Coopnest, 9-4 Premier Lengus, 5-1 Chez Catalan, 6-1 Media Express, 8-1 Tomandu, 20-1 Decisiony

2.20 VENTINOR SELLING STAKES (CLASS G) 52.875 added 3YO 7f 54035-4 MASTERSTROKE (7) (BF) 8 Meeten 9 7...... 65034-2 BROADGATE FLYER (7) Mrs 1 Studds 8 11.... SETTRIC: 6-4 Stelds Cachos Lad, 7-4 Broadgate Fiyer, 5-2 Mesterstruke, 12-1 Zasabay, 14-1 Toose

2.50 RYDE HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,025 added

3.20 SHANKLIN HANDICAP (CLASS D) £4,900 added 3YO 1m ____A Daily (5) 3

3.50 COWES MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £4,900 added 6f

1.55: 1. JiBERREEN (D Hantson) 5-2 tav.
2. Afram 14-1; 3. Beld Antsocrat 7-1. 9 rea. 5, ni. (P Howfing, Godelming, Tober 51-10; £1-30, £1-90, £1-50. DF: £12-40. CSF: £22-07. Tito: £48-90.
2.25: 1. CHINA CASTLE (S Drowne) 13-8 tav. 2. Martium 8-1: 3. Windtire 7-1. 14 rea. 9, 10. (P Heastern, Mikadeham). Totor: £2-05. £1-40, £2-50. £2-70. DF: £9-50. GSF: £1-6. 48. Titosat: £7-6.27. Tito: £2-4.50.
2.55: 1. ELTON LEDGER U Wester) 4-1 tax; 2. Asvenome Venture 14-1; 3. Little Ibrar 10-1. 11 rea. Nk. 25°. (Mrx N Maczadky, Melton Mowbray). Totor: £5-10; £1-50, £3-00. £4-70. DF: £5-4-90. CSF: £56-48. Titosat: £50-6.31. Tito: £21-4.10.
3.28: 1. MARDREEN U Quint) 5-1; 2. Aspecto Led 5-1; 3. Diamond Eyre 6-4 fav. 12 rea. 4. 6. (D firench) Dwfs. Upper Lambourn). Your: £5-20; £1-30, £3-10, £1-50. DF: £22-50. CSF: £34-67. Tito: £44-00. -7 declared -BETTRNG: 7-4 Misty Cay, 11-4 Globetration, 5-1 Basheth, 8-1 Rockes, Kings-down Rtz, 10-1 Verlader's Gift, 16-1 Natite - 6 declared -BETTRIG: 5-4 Forgotion Times, 5-2 Silent Weapon, 3-1 Mystery Mr. 7-1 Come Dencing, 25-1 Avant Holt, 33-1 Logie Part Lad

FRANCE

FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP: This weekend kicks off a crucial tournament. Chris Hewett assesses the prospects and the players

Seeking Lions' share of success

rrelevant, inhibited, insular and in dire need of a fundamental shake-up? Overhyped, over-valued and, regrettably, over here? Yes, the Five Nations' Championship is with us again, bringing with it the now traditional hotch-potch of rugby emotions - the delicious tingle of anticipation and unrivalled sense of occasion, undermined so often by the absence of real quality and the knowledge that south of the Equator, the All Blacks and ern hemisphere powers disap-peared. That could happen this Springboks are more likely to be shaking with laughter than time, too. trembling with fear.

It is the height of fashion these days to give the Five Nations short shrift and it is difficult to argue with the jeremians who point to the fact that England won last year's title by scoring fewer tries - three in four games - than any of their rivals, having fallen back on a prehistoric game plan rendered obsolete by the Super-12 and Iri-Nations Tournaments that followed Down Under. Yet this season's showpiece

could hardly be more significant or carry with it more responsibility; the first fully professional Lions party in history leaves for South Africa in mid-May and in the absence of more than a handful of stone-cold certainties the selectors will base their decisions on the events of the next 10 weeks. Fran Cotton. the tour manager, has stated that contenders who fail to win a Five Nations place will come under consideration regardless, so it follows that while some first-choice internationals will play themselves on to the trip during this tournament, others will play themselves off it.

According to Finlay Calder. whose triumph in Australia in 1989 made him the first and only successful Lions captain since 1974, this year's Five Nations is central to the success of this summer's series. "The Lions have an enormous task in front must gain the respect of the South Africans. A really bad tour would do inestimable damage to the Lions as an institution. If things go wrong in selection, the consequences will

be too terrible to contemplate. "Ideally, the selectors should already have a framework in place - you can't tell me players ike Martin Johnson and Gregor Townsend haven't been pencilled in - and if it were me, I'd have nominated my captain and insisted he play a full role in constructing the squad. But the important thing is to pick form players and you can only do that off the back of the Five Nations."

The former Scottish captain also believes that a successful Lions tour would give the British game a much-needed injection of confidence and self-esteem in the run-up to the 1999 World Cup. "When we beat Australia eight years ago, both the Scots and the English reaped a huge benefit in terms of national performance. Strong, successful teams came out of that trip and for a while at least our inferiority complex in relation to the south-

In sharp contrast to his colourful image as the original claymore-wielding Scottish rugby warrior, Calder is unexpectedly complimentary about England, the obvious title favourites. "From a Lions perspective, we need to take the very best available squad to South Africa and that quite clearly calls for an enormous contribution from the English. There will be no room for compromise, for diplomatic trade-offs in selection; the English are light years ahead of any other home union in the quality of their club rugby and that should be reflected when the par-ty is announced - provided, of course, they are up to speed in

the Five Nations. Whatever its stature on the world stage - "quite frankly, I can't imagine that Wales versus Ireland will persuade thousands of people in Manawatu or Wairarapa Bush to forgo a night's sleep," Calder said - the extraordinary public and commercial appeal of the Five Nations gives it an almost impregnable foothold in the national sporting psyche.
All 10 matches have been

sold out for months and that cast-iron popularity is the driving force behind the £277m BSkvB broadcasting deal currently waiting to be signed. All we need now is for the

cream to rise. For Townsend to set the Championship alight as his countryman, Rob Wainwright, to confirm his recovery from injury; for the two Scotts, Gibbs and Quinnell, to make themselves first-choice Lions by inspiring the long-awaited Welsh renaissance; for Brian Ashton to make some sense of a chaotic Irish back division and perhaps bring the best out of the great under-achiever, Jonathan Bell; and for England to start using a front five of world-class potential as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

It is asking a lot. But if the prospect of a Lions adventure is not sufficient stimulus, we re-



ENGLAND

Simon Shaw: Heavy duty up front

Possession may be nine-tenths of the law, but the remaining 10 They were not supposed to be much good last year, but their unper cent and how to obtain it remains a source of bafflement to expected Grand Slam charge was halted only by a characteris-Jack Rowell and his not-so-meny men. Flawed selection at loose- tically Neanderthal display from Dean Richards. The Scots were forward and half-back in the pre-Christmas programme created disappointingly conciliatory when the Wallabies visited Murraya sow's ear from the silk purse sewn by Jeson Leonard's outstanding field in November, but the return to fitness of Rob Wainwright tight unit and unless the issues are addressed, England will remain vulnerable to any side capable of winning line-out ball. For Townsend and very decent scrum-halves in Gary Armstrong and all that, the clout of heavy-duty forwards like Martin Johnson and Bryan Redpath, but unless someone lights a fire in the bellies of Simon Shaw ought to pave the way for a Triple Crown at least, the lightweights up front, neither England nor France will lose sleep even though trips to Dublin and Cardiff are on the itinerary. Prospects: Firm favourites.

IRELAND



Keith Wood: All-action man

Photograph: Empics

Heaven only knows. Any side capable of pushing Australia right to the wire one day and losing pathetically to Italy the next, is beyond the call of reason and it will be no surprise if Brian Ashton, the new coaching adviser, expands the selection panel by one to include Russell Grant. The recall of two seasoned halfbacks, Eric Elwood and Niall Hogan, for this weekend's opener against the French, suggest the frish are willing to fight for their reputation, for neither man is a shrinking violet. However, apart from Keith Wood, the all-action hooker who captains the team, Ireland are woefully short of genuine Test talent.

SCOTLAND

FORM GUIDE TO THE CONTENDERS AND PRETENDERS



Photograph: Alisport Gregor Townsend: Talented back

should do wonders. They possess an uncut diamond in Gregor at the prospect of facing them on home turf. Hang on, though, weren't we all saying the same things 12 months ago?

Prospects: Mid-table at worst.

Fixtures

January 18: Scotland v Wales Ireland v France

February 1: England v Scotland Wales v Ireland

February 15: Ireland v England France v Wales March 1: England v France

Scotland v Ireland March 15: Wales v England France v Scotland

Championship winners Outright Shared

Wales	22	11
England	22	9
Scotland	13	8
ireland	10	9
France	10	7
-		

Grand Slams

England - 11 (1913, 1914, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1928, 1957, 1980, 1991, 1992, 1995)

Wales - 8 (1908, 1909, 1911, 1950, 1952, 1971, 1976, 1978)

France – 4 (1968, 1977, 1981, 1987) **Scotland** - 3 (1925, 1984, 1990)

Ireland - 1 (1948)

Glonously, infuriatingly unpredictable, it is a decade since the French won at Twickenham and the indications point to a continuation - Jean-Claude Skrela's side has been affected by injury and the coach has not helped with some off-the-wall selection. Yet one flash of genius from Alain Penaud, Thomas Castaighèide or Steichane Glas in midfield could turn the shooting match on its head; on their day, the French backs are untouchable. They will be as formidable as ever up front - they had two World XV contenders in Christian Califano and Abdelatif Benazzi - and if their chosen scrumhalf plays anything like, they will take some stopping. Prospects: The main threat to England.

WALES



Robert Howley: Vibrant scrum-half Photograph: Empics

In a sense, it's now or never for the Welsh. For years, they have used the exodus of talent to rugby league as an excuse for their failings at international level. Now that Quinnell, Gibbs, Bateman, Young and Davies are back, the moment has arrived to put up or shut up. False dawns come as second nature to those with the Red Dragon at heart, but this championship gives them rea cause for optimism. Robert Howley's talents at scrum-half should bring out the best in a back-row more physical than any seen at the Arms Park in a decade and if Arwel Thomas errs on the right side of sanity at stand-off, things are sure to happen out wide.

Humphreys set to walk disciplinary tightrope

CHRIS HEWETT

Asking Jonathan Humphreys to stop being impetuous is rather like telling Alf Garnet to cut out the bad language but Kevin Bowring the Welsh coach, has decided to try his luck anyway. In retaining Humphreys as na-tional captain for this weekend's Five Nations opener against Scotland at Murrayfield, Bowring is demanding a "dis-ciplined, effective game" from the notoriously headstrong Cardiff hooker. Or else, he

might have added.

Bowring was close to keeping

faith with Garin Jenkins of tion to be in; I am grateful for the Swansea, who filled in for the suspended Humphreys in the warmup match with the United States last weekend, and another penalty-plagued performance in Edinburgh will almost certainly cost the skipper his job.

"I have learned a harsh lesson," said Humphreys yesterday, referring to his dismissal in the Heineken European Cup semifinal in Brive 10 days ago. "I realise that I cannot be so impetuous, that I do not have to save my team single-handed. I watched last Saturday's game against the Eagles from the stand and it was not a nice posi-

Welsh management and I aim to repay them. It is not a question of compromising the way I play. but of understanding that I cannot get away with things."

The Welsh selectors have reverted to the side that would have faced the Americans but for injury and disciplinary problems; the only other change sees Justin Thomas giving way to Neil Jenkins at full-back - a move that will certainly interest the Lions hierarchy, who must be having nightmares about their goalkicking options in South Africa this summer.

for the unpredictable Arwel Thomas over the more dependable talents of Jonathan Davies at outside-half. "I will say it again: Arwel creates opportunities for the backs when he plays, although I agree we must he far more ruthless and clinical in finishing off those

chances," the coach said. Not surprisingly, the Irish selectors wielded a bigger axe in advance of their match with France in Dublin. Half-backs Steve McIvor and Paul Burke carry the can for the embarrassing recent home defeat by

Bowring felt compelled to de-fend his continued preference wood resume their partnership against the French - while Gabriel Fulcher loses out to Paddy Johns in the second row. Eric Miller of Leicester filling the resulting gap at No 8.

Brian Ashton, the new coaching advisor to the Irish national squad, was not involved in selection but helped run a training session in Dublin vesterday, immediately impressing his unfamiliar charges. "His appointment gives us a new ray of hope and, given our recent results, we certainly need it." said David Corkery, the blind-side flanker. One enforced change to the frish line-up sees Maurice Field, the 32-year-old centre from Malone, replace the injured Mark McCall in midfield.

Springbok primed to bolster Bedford

ond Division with the signing of the South African international Rudi Straeuli.

The 33-year-old flanker, who played for the Springboks in their 1995 World Cup final triumph, is expected in Bedford on Thursday and could be in the side to play Rugby Lions on Saturday. A club spokesman said: There are still one or two loose ends to tie up but we expect him here on Thursday and hope he can play on Saturday. looking to off-load those where the came here before are surplus to requirements."

Bedford have stepped up their promotion push from the Sec-around the club. He was under contract to the South African Rugby Union then, though was not in their current squad." The player-coach, Paul Turn-

er, and director of rugby. Ge-

Bees disapp

7 349

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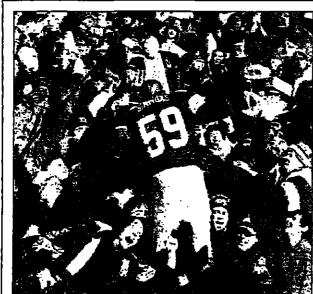
Section 2

off Cooke, have made it clear to Frank Warren, the club's backer, that they could not sustain a promotion challenge with their current players.

The spokesman added: "We are still aiming to recruit more

players and will now have to start

looking to off-load those who



Green Bay Packers fans celebrate with Wayne Simmons

For four years the New England Patriots have performed in a way so at odds with the instincts of their head coach that at times he has seemed in need of psychiatric help. For their most important game of the period. however, at least half the side remembered his roots, and played like a Bill Parcells team. Before arriving in Massachu-

setts, Parcells had won two Su-

Giants outfit that relied on a bril-

liantly intimidating defense,

could run the ball well, and ap-

peared willing to pass only when

Ameriçan football

MATT TENCH

all else had failed. Yet Parcells' first action in charge of his new side was to use the top pick of the draft to acquire Drew Bledsoc, the quarterback billed as the new Dan Marino. There followed a fascinating period during which probably the most traditional coach in the league presided over its most hi-tech offense and made do with a defense that was never remotely considered among the league's best.

Small wonder that when the equally lopsided Jacksonville Jaguars arrived for Sunday's per Bowls with a New York AFC Championship game the general expectation was for a high-scoring bonanza. Instead Bledsoe's unit was rendered virtually powerless, but the Patriots won 20-6 thanks to a superhuman effort from their defenders.

Super Bowl date for Patriots and Packers

The Patriots now meet the Green Bay Packers in this season's Super Bowl at the Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans, on Sunday week. The Pack were much more rounded as they dispensed with the Carolina Panthers in Arctic conditions in the NFC Championship game at Lambeau Field, and have already been installed as heavy favourites. The Pats' only chance would appear to lie with the wiles of Parcells, who would become the first coach to win the Super Bowl with different sides if he did pull off an upset.

the stadium lights went out, which seemed appropriate on a day that New England's attack touchdown, Brunell's pass was ing pass to Dorsey Levens and intercepted by Willie Clay in the end zone. Two further turnovers the quarterback's virtues that completely lost its spark. Despite scoring early, it stuttered from the start, got worse, and was only rescued by the Pats' excellent special teams (coached by Parcells himself) and resolute defense, which enabled them to go

in at half-time with a 13-3 lead. In the third quarter Mark Brunell, the Jags quarterback, added to his growing reputation as the most dangerous young play-caller in the league, but a series of impressive drives only resulted in the lead being cut to 13-6. Then with just under four

allowed the Patriots to win by the deceptively comfortable score of 20-6, which was almost as unfair as the fact that Brunell's one bad play proved crucial, rather than Bledsoe's generally dismal dis-

Green Bay's Brett Favre was also at fault as the Pack began hesitantly in temperatures that, with the wind chill, went as low as -27C. Favre was intercepted deep in his own half, and then dropped the ball while scrambling, the Panthers capitalising on both to score 10 points.

Midway through the second minutes left, and the Jags seem-quarter of the game at Foxboro ingly poised to score the tying thrown a perfect 29-yard scor-a five-year. £4.7m deal.

as the game progressed so it was the quarterback's virtues that prevailed and, with Levens contributing 205 yards, the Pack ran out 30-13 winners. It was the sweetest of triumphs for the fanatical fans of the NFL's smallest but oldest franchise one that returns it to the Super Bowl for the first time since a certain Vince Lombardi was in charge, but nobody in Wiscon sin was happier than Farre himself. "This is what we play our whole lives for," he said. Bobby Ross, the head coach of San Diego until his resigna-tion a fortnight ago, has taken charge of Detroit after agreeing



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te then been offered to find the second

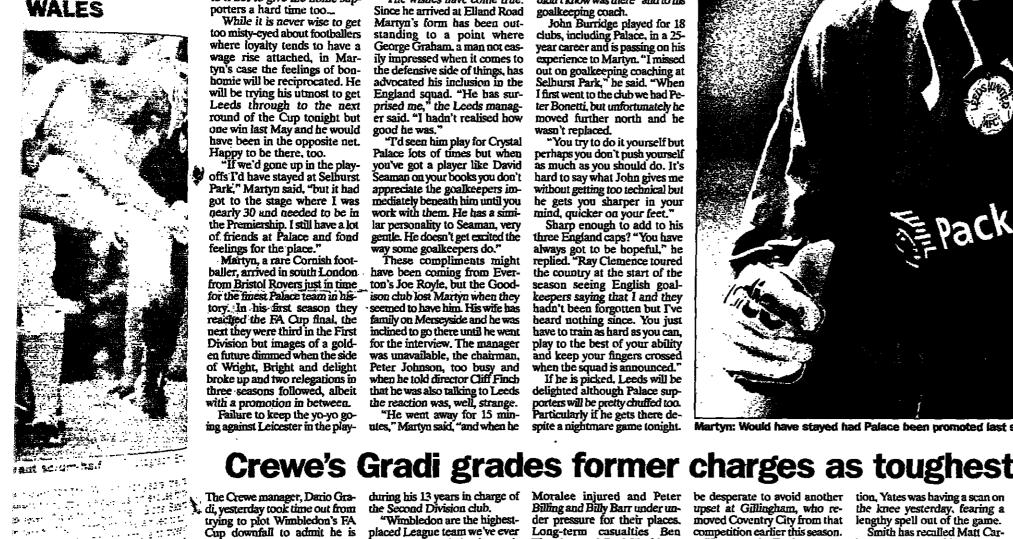
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THE SET IN LAND THE REPORT

Hart String - 12 mer truestes ta, an un come entre que sento en organia



Cricket MARK BALDWIN reports from Palmerston North NZC Selection XI 138 England 106-3

Michael Atherton yesterday revealed that he would like one more attempt at beating Australia this summer before bringing his four-year reign as England captain to a close.

His tenure as captain, how-ever, depends on a successful second leg of the tour and although Atherton continued his wretched run of form, England produced art took a shine to the home atan improved performance on the tack. Atherton's failure opening day of their match against a New Zealand XI.

Craig White took 4 for 15 and the pacemen, Dominic Cork, Andy Caddick and Chris Silverwood claimed wickets as England dismissed a team containing eight Test players for 138.

Then, despite Atherton's early departure for seven, they reached 106 for 3 by the close as Nick Knight and Alec Stew-

coincided with a candid admission that the pressures of the captaincy were beginning to affect him. "I can't see me doing it much longer," he said. "If the second part of this winter's tour goes well, then I would like to do the job in the summer against

then I won't be doing it any longer. That much is obvious.

At Fitzherbert Park yesterday, Atherton never threatened to compile a sizeable innings. He edged Danny Morrison just short of the wicketkeeper. Adam Parore, and also fended off a lifting delivery that lobbed dangerously close to gully. An inside edge against Robert Kennedy brought two more runs but, having steered

the young paceman for a four. ment." Atherton's problems Atherton fell to the 16th ball. overshadowed an all-round per-He went back and across to a Kennedy delivery but moved in off the scam and looked plumb lbw. Steve Dunne, the umpire,

Atherton looks to a final summer as England improve

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certainly thought so .
"We must have confidence that runs will come for Mike, and they will," David Lloyd, the England coach, said. "We've got to give him our full support. He's a quality player who is just out of form a bit at the mo-

overshadowed an all-round performance more encouraging than almost anything produced by England in Zimbahwe.

Once Caddick had broken an opening stand of 48 by having Blair Pocock caught in the slips off a lifting delivery, success came at regular intervals. Atherton held a spectacular catch in the gully lo remove Parore after he had cut Silverwood, Craig Spearman dragged

White's first delivery into his stumps and, before long, the home side were reeling at 98 for 7.

Felt. 1-48 2-53 3-58 4-81 5-93 6-97 7-98.
8-125 9-137.
Bowling: Core 17-7-42-2; Caudick 16-3-48-1; Saveneous 12-4-24-2; White 9-4-3-15-4; Turber 3-0-5-0.

7.
First day of four; England won foss
NZC SELECT IC - First Immings
B A Pocock of thrope to Caddich
C J Spearman to White
Y A C Purche of Atherton to Shientwood
M A Home of Shientwood to Cort
M J Greatbatch of Cork to Winte
L G Howell of Caddick to Cork
J T C Vaughan to White
P J Witeman of Stewart to Shientwood
M J Hasiam run our. J Haslem run ouz K Momson c Thorpe b White R J Kennedy not out ... Extres (ib4 nb3) Total (57,4 evers)

ENGLAND - First tenings

N Y Kinght c Parine b Kromson .

"M A Attention low b Kremedy ...

JA J Stemant not out...

A R Cardick c Parine b Morrison

Falt: 1-19 2-94 3-10 To bate G P Thome, J P Crawley, C White, D G Cork, C E W Saherwood, P C R Turnell, Bowling (to darb): Morrison 10-2-20-2; Armedy 8-2-31-1; Vaggran 7-2-29-0; Wise-man 7-1-22-0; Haslam 1-1-0-0.

Martyn's return wins rare respect

There should be no boos the first time Nigel Martyn touches the ball at Selhurst Park tonight. Someone with a short memory might try but he will be hushed by those around him. In south London speak, Nigel is one of us.

True, he left Crystal Palace for Leeds United last summer but he lingered longer than most and that is appreciated at a place where better players have not been known for their adhesiveness. The club's fanzine has issued dire warnings for those who give Martyn a hard time in tonight's FA Cup third round tie, and if he could see to it not to give the home supporters a hard time too...

While it is never wise to get too misty-eyed about footballers where loyalty tends to have a wage rise attached, in Martyn's case the feelings of bonhomie will be reciprocated. He will be trying his utmost to get Leeds through to the next round of the Cup tonight but one win last May and he would have been in the opposite net. Happy to be there, too.

'If we'd gone up in the playoffs I'd have stayed at Selhurst Park," Martyn said, "but it had got to the stage where I was nearly 30 and needed to be in the Premiership. I still have a lot of friends at Palace and fond feelings for the place."

Martyn, a rare Cornish footballer, arrived in south London have been coming from Everfrom Bristol Rovers just in time for the finest Palace team in history. In his first season they next they were third in the First Division but images of a golden future dimmed when the side of Wright, Bright and delight broke up and two relegations in three seasons followed, albeit with a promotion in between. Failure to keep the yo-yo going against Leicester in the play-

Cup downfall to admit he is

Gradi, who enjoyed a three-

year spell as manager of the Dons

from 1978 just 12 months after

they were elevated to the Foot-

ball League, insists that meeting

the toughest test he has tackled

the south Londoners represents

facing an impossible task.

Leeds'goalkeeper revisits his old club in the FA Cup tonight. **Guy Hodgson** reports

offs at Wembley last May was the last disappointment for Martyn and he was gone, if not forgotten. "I had letters of support from Crystal Palace supporters when I moved to Leeds which was nice," he said. "They were thanking me for the years and saying they were glad I didn't just chuck it in the first time we got relegated or the second time. They understood this was my chance and they wished me well."

The wishes have come true. Since he arrived at Elland Road Martyn's form has been outstanding to a point where George Graham, a man not easily impressed when it comes to the defensive side of things, has advocated his inclusion in the England squad. "He has sur-prised me," the Leeds manager said. "I hadn't realised how good he was."

"I'd seen him play for Crystal Palace lots of times but when you've got a player like David Seaman on your books you don't appreciate the goalkeepers immediately beneath him until you work with them. He has a similar personality to Seaman, very gentle. He doesn't get excited the ay some goalkeepers do."

These compliments might ton's Joe Royle, but the Goodison club lost Martyn when they seemed to have him. His wife has inclined to go there until he went for the interview. The manager was unavailable, the chairman, Peter Johnson, too busy and when he told director Cliff Finch that he was also talking to Leeds the reaction was, well, strange.

"He went away for 15 minutes," Martyn said, "and when he

placed League team we've ever

faced. It's like mission impossi-

ble for us, but you can never rule

us out of doing it and a trip to

play Manchester United in the

fourth round is the biggest and best incentive we could have."

Gradi is set to make at least

three changes, with Jamie

to make it 6-5 and Panthers could defend a lead. Bees' minder

Mark Bernard foiled three at-

tacks and, with a minute left, he

was pulled for the extra player,

ingstoke, winning 4-3 in over-

time, must have hoped for

easier pickings after the short

journey to Bracknell. No such luck as Dean Richards opened

the scoring for Bees, leaving

Steelers to play catch-up hock-

ey until, with the score 3-3 and

10 minutes to go, Nicky Chinn

saved Steelers' blushes with

the winner. But the hero of the

match was Mark Bernard again,

facing a shot a minute and just

TODAY'S FIXTURES

conceding the three.

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE

Tedford v Stalybridge (7.45)

SPALDING CHALLENGE CUP

Welling v Famborough (7.45)

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE

Airdrie y Greenock Morton

Alios v Inverness Cal Thistie FA CARLSBERG VASE Fourth resid: Reading Town v Barsteed Ath.

Ing Town v Bansleed Am.
ICES LEAGUE Premier Divisions Enfield v Carshahon; Greys v Purfied; (7.45).

REMARTENS LEAGUE Southern Divisions
Peet Town v Newgor; LOW, League Cup Talet
rounds Burton v Nalesowen; Circlemany Post Green; fileston Town v Moor Creen
(7.45); Merthy v RC Warwick; Selipbury Weymouth; Sutbury Town v St Lean its Stemcroft.
Premier Divisions Athersone v Nuneelon.

Premier Division: Autoriting V remier Divi-SCREWFEX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Divi-cione Rustol Manor Farm v Caine Town.

QUARTER FRALS

PREMIER DIVISION

St Mines v Falkirk ... SECOND DIVISION

Raith v Coitis .

FIRST DIVISION

THIRD DIVISION

Sheffield Steelers, having had a hard match against Bas-

but Panthers hung on.

came back he gave me the di-rections to the M62 and told me to leave as early as I could because the traffic was building. I can understand they didn't want to get involved in an auction, but they had me there. If they'd worked harder they might have kept me. I came over to Leeds and was treated completely dif-

ferently. They made more effort." That early work has proved worthwhile because Graham estimates that his goalkeeper has made only two mistakes since the two joined forces. That, Martyn puts down to the eagerness to impress new supporters, colleagues and managers which gave him access to "an extra 10 per cent you didn't know was there" and to his goalkeeping coach.

John Burridge played for 18 clubs, including Palace, in a 25-year career and is passing on his experience to Martyn. "I missed out on goalkeeping coaching at Selhurst Park," he said. "When I first went to the club we had Peter Bonetti, but unfortunately he moved further north and he wasn't replaced.

"You try to do it yourself but perhaps you don't push yourself as much as you should do. It's hard to say what John gives me without getting too technical but he gets you sharper in your mind, quicker on your feet."

Sharp enough to add to his three England caps? "You have always got to be hopeful," he replied. "Ray Clemence toured the country at the start of the season seeing English goalkeepers saying that I and they hadn't been forgotten but I've have to train as hard as you can, play to the best of your ability and keep your fingers crossed when the squad is announced."

If he is picked, Leeds will be delighted although Palace supporters will be pretty chaffed too.

Thatcher and Paul Heald are

missing for Wimbledon and

Brian McAllister is standing by

for Dean Blackwell, who has a

Derby County, having al-ready been put out of the Coca-

Cola Cup by Luton Town, will



spite a nightmare game tonight. Martyn: Would have stayed had Palace been promoted last season

SPORTING DIGEST

Mercedes Championship was formance from the most exhilarating player the game has seen for a long time. The \$216,000 (£130,000) first

prize at Carlsbad, California, gave the 21-year-old Woods \$1,006,594 in career winnings in only nine events since turning professional. The previous fastest was Ernie Els who needed 28 events to win his first \$1 m. And only Gene Sarazen and Horton Smith won three events at a younger age than Woods. "It's a perfect start," Woods, said after shooting a near hole-

in-one with a six-iron from 186 yards to win a play-off with Tom Lebman on the first extra hole. Sunday's play was washed out and the tournament reduced to three rounds. Asked if he was surprised by winning a third time so quickly. Woods said: "No, only

– win every tournament."

Clubs welcome back prodigals

Rugby League DAVE HADFIELD

The game has welcomed back its prodigals from rugby union with a prediction that they will not repeat this winter's diversion. As players like the Paul brothers. Gary Connolly and Jason

Robinson return to their league

clubs this week, the game's chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, said he was not surprised by their success in the other code. They are world-class athletes with breathtaking ability. We are pleased to see them back and can assure them that they will be taking part in one of the

greatest seasons in rugby league's proud history," he said. Our top players are likely to be involved from February until the middle of November. Surely after all that it will be time to lie on a beach and let mind and body recover."

St Helens have denied receiving an approach from Richmond or Bath for their captain, Bobbie Goulding. The player himself said yesterday: "I am trying to negotiate an improved contract at Saints, but the club doesn't seem able to do any-

thing. I want to sort something out before it gets to the point where I ask for a transfer."

The former Keighley coach Phil Larder has gone back to his old club to try to sign Nick Pinkney and Martin Wood for Sheffield Eagles, Salford have got back their Western Samoan winger Fata Sim after fearing they had lost him to rugby union. Sim had signed for Llanelli but is to return without playing a match. And the Oldham scrum-half Martin Crompton has ended speculation about his future by signing an improved two-year contract with the club.

Hull Kingston Rovers have averted the immediate danger of closure by winning an administration order in court in Leeds. The club admitted to debts of £1m last week and were served with a winding-up order by the Inland Revenue over an unpaid tax bill of £250,000.

Edward Klempka, of financial consultants Coopers and Lybrand, also confirmed the club is solvent with assets of more than £2.5m. "The crisis is born out of a cash flow problem and I will be looking to drip feed the £200,000 Sky Television money to meet creditors' demands," he said.

Woods' latest win breaks more records

Golf

Tiger Woods' victory in the

because it is what I set out to do

Russians are tall order for Towers

Basketbali RICHARD TAYLOR

London Towers must scale unson's European Cup campaign when they face Autodor Saratov of Russia, at Wemblev tonight, particularly in the shape of the visitors' two 7ft tall centres.

London qualified for the last 32 knock-out stage before Christmas, but the penalty for finishing only fourth in their group is to face the group winners, Saratov, who lost just once in their 10 qualifying

Seven-footer Gintara Einikis won an Olympic bronze medal in Atlanta with his Lithuanian and Saratov team-mate, Darius Luminkas.

To comply with European regulations, Cadle has to leave out Keith Robinson and Tony Windless from his Stateside quartet, and 6ft 11in Neville Austin and 6ft 9in Joe Hooks are his tallest players to face

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Ister Bedford

d Packers FA CHALLENGE CUP THERD ROUND FA CHALLENGE CUP THEIR MULLUM
Barneticed v Man City (7.45)
Branticed v Man City (7.45)
Carliste v Tranmere (7.45)
Chesterfield v Bristol City
Crown v Windisdood (7.45)
Crystal Paluce v Leeds (7.45)
Bringham v Derby (7.45)
Luton v Botton (7.45)
Notts County v Aston VIBA (7.46)
Watthrid v Oxford Util (7.46)

Busy Bees disappointed maining, Mike Ellis was left free

Bracknell Bees, second from bottom in the Superleague with eight wins from 24 starts, came desperately close to a fourpointer weekend, losing by just one goal in both games, writes Steve Pinder.

Up first were Nottingham Panthers, who took a two-goal lead in just four minutes through Neil Morgan and Randall Weber. However, Dale Junkin and Chris Brant equalised and another goal apiece saw the first period end 3-3. Panthers, scoring three without reply in the second, should have sealed matters but, in the third, Bees came out fired up, with Brant pulling one back in the first minute.

And, with seven minutes re-

THIRD ROUND REPLAY

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Postponed; Mansfield v Doncaster.

THE AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD

MORTHERN SECTION SECOND ROUND

SOUTHERN SECTION SECOND ROUND

American football NFI, CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS: NFC: Green Bay Packers 30 Carolina Pargners 13, AFC: New England Patriots 20 Jacksonville Jaguars 6.

Basketball MBA: Orlando 88 Toronto 85; Milwaukee 11.1 Golden State 93; Charlotte 97 Sagramento 92. BUDWEISER LEAGUE (Sum): Sheffield Sherts 106 Hernet & Westland Royals 73: Pleyboy TV Leop-ards 89 Mewcassile Eagles 76.

thigh strain.

SNEPPIELD SHEELD (time) day of four): South Australia 527 for 6 dec (D Lemmann 255) and 5.1 fbr 1; Queensiand 227 fb Secondo 561 and 350 (G Foly 72, M Hoyden 69). South Aus-tralia won by nine wickets.

Mote: New South Wates permitted 0.2pts for slow over rate in their match against Tasmania. Vic-toria penalised 0.3pts for the Same reason in the game against New South Wates.

Football

The South American World Cup quali-fying competition was thrown wide open on Sunday when Peru and Bollyla

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Divi-sion: Fakennam Town v March Town Utd.

TEMSON WESSEX LEAGUE Pirst Division Berneron Heath Hart v Wimborne Town Thaschain Town v Whitehunch Und. WOUSTON EAD KENT LEAGUE First Division: Themesmand Town v Folkestone hands. NORTHERN COUNTRES EAST LEAGUE Promier Division: Casett Albion y Sheffield. NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Di-

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Di-visions Burscough v Holser Old Boys, Essi-wood Hamiley v Kotagrove Attrastic; Selford City v Newcastle Town.

LEASUE OF WALES: Barry Town v Cwimbran; Connent's Quay v Conwy; Flint Town v Rhyl; Lensenthiald v Caersws.

CALOR COUNTY ANTRIM SHIELD Semi-si-nal: Crusaders v Chitorwille (Whodgor Paris). PONITINS LEAGUE CUP Group Three: Man City v Stockport (7.0). Group Fourt Grimsby v Chesterfield (7.0). AYON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Avon Insurance Communication read Divisions (Inches v Minivel (7.0) (Vingstoni-ans FC); Watlord v QPR (Chesham FC). FA YOUTH CUP Taint round: Bristol City v Bournemouth; QPR v Wintbiedon; Gravesend & Northfeet v Tottenham Hotspur.

EUROPEAN CUP First round first leg: London Towers v Amodox Seratov (Rus) (8.0).

and Anzentina drew 0-0. Only two points play each other twice, nears the halfway mark. The top four teams in the group qualify for the 1998 World Cup in France, with Brazil exempt from the qualifying

However, the Derby manag-

er, Jim Smith, has to find a re-

placement for Igor Stimac after

Dean Yates damaged a knee in

Saturday's 1-1 draw at Wim-

bledon. With the Croat centre-

back suspended and out for five

weeks after a hernia opera-

With Bright Exempt, from the specially tournament, as holders, south American World Cul? (Lima); Peru 2 (Meaguri 14, Palacios 34) Chile 1 (Zamorano 88), (La Pagi; Bolwa 2 (Moreto 7, Eurieven) 12) Equador 0. (Montavideo): Ungary 0 Ar-

Crewe's Gradi grades former charges as toughest test yet

gentra O.

FA CARL SESTIN WASE Fifth-round draw; Customust Town v Southerd Menor or Websch Town: Managerstried United or Taunton Town v Spaiding United; Stamford AFC or North Ferrby United v Concord Rangers or Whistable Town; Durham City v Histon or Northwood; Mossiey or Cogenitice Linued v Barlang or Woodhough Town; Whittby Town v Thestoram Town or Treaton Town; Reading Town or Benstand Arvience v Adeley Town or Herne Bay, Bennatura V Bedington Temera. (Test to be played Saturday 1 February, 3.0)

GONT

SIGRICIDES CHAMPIONISTERS (Carlabad, Call)
Leading final-round scores (fourth round carr-called - rate, US unless stated); 202 T Woods 70 67 65; T Lenman 66 67 69 (Noots won at first play-off note), 208 P Goydos 67 71, 70; F COUNES 65 69 70, 209 S Jones 70 71, 68; D Love N 70 67 72, 210 J Cook 70 71 69; C Pawn 70 72 68; F Funk 73 69 69; P Michelson 71, 68 72, Selectad; 212 E Bs (SA) 72 70 70, 214 N Faldo (E6) 72 7; 71 4

NHL: NY Rangers 3 New Jersey C; Edmonton 2 Herdord 1 (cd; Vancouver 2 Anaheam; Pissent, 2 Buffalo 3 (cd).

2 SUPERLEAGUE (Butt: Ayr 4 Carolf 7; Besingstole 3 Sheffield 4 (by); Notingram 6 Backnef 5; (Burt: Brackneff 3 Sheffield 4; Mancheser 4 Besingstole 1; Newcestle 4 Ayr 5 (ou. 1: Newceste 4 Ay 5 (out.
PREMIET: LEABUE (Salt): Slough 15 Mechay 0;
Sollhul 7 Guiddord 8 (od; Swindon 20 Peterborough 5: Telford 12 Kingston 2 Sunday Guildtod 7 Telions 2; Kingston 21; Peterborough 3;
Mechay 4 Swindon 11; Sollhul 4 Stough 0.
NORTHERN PREMIETE LEABUE (Salt): Exteresin
3 Durnities 6; File 14 Biochoum 9; Whitely 8 Murayfield 6 Sunday Blackburn 4 Pasky 10; Durnities 3 Wholey 7; Murrayfeld 5 File 8.

Rallying
DAKAR-AGADES-DAKAR RALLY Minth stage
(Agestes to Desire, 3:15km); Carre 1.1 Kenscrinkt (Cen Bugg 2n 25mm 56sec; 2 B Seby
(F) Missibith +4436; 3.1 F Forterly [F) Misscrinkt (Cen Bugg 2n 25mm 56sec; 2 B Seby
(F) Missibith +41436; 3.1 F Forterly [F) Misscrinkt +626; 4 K Shinzules (Japan) Missibith
+825; 5 H Messibia Lepan) Missibith +1143;
8 S Servic (So) Missan +1866; 7 J-P Strugo
(F) Missibelli +15:43; 8 P Simmentanticion
(Thai) Missibelli +15:43; 8 P Simmentanticion
(Thai) Missibelli +17:07; 9 M Tragio (D Neson +20:38; 10 D Quedes (Por) Nissan 21:52
Overall standings: 1 Forterlay 38:150; 2 Simnosica +17:esc; 3 Seby +87:06; 4 Messibith
+21:204; 5 Servic +42:236; 6 Messibith
+31:29; 7 Tragio +4.56;45; 8 Strugo
+5:20:12; 9 Simentanium +5:49:17; 10 C
Souce (Por) Missibelli +7:40:59, sientercycles:
11 Magnald; (F) KTM 2:38:41; 2 D Castera (Fr)

Vameha +4:57: 3 S Peterhensel (Fr) Yerreha +5:57: 4 O Galtarto (Sp) Cagua +5:43: 5 C Striet (Sp) Cagua +7:41: 6 J Lewis (LS) KfM +1:19: 7 A de Assectio (Bh) KfM +9:27: 8 J Arcarots (Sp.) KfM +9:34: 9 D Von Zitzewiz (Au) KfM +1:35: 10 Blucy (Fr) KfM +1:3:5 Overall standings: 1 Peterhansel 40:48:04: 2 Arcarots +1:27:22: 3 Galadod +2:12:27: 4 Lewis +2:39:59: 5 + Castura 2:40:03: 6 Von Zitzewitz +3:28:00: 7 G Malerto (It) kawasaku +4:23:50.

bon to play alongside Paul Mc-

Grath and Gary Rowett at the

back in tonight's third-round tie.

out their top three strikers, in-

cluding the £250,000 signing,

Ade Akinbiyi, who joined them

too late from Norwich last week

Gillingham, though, are with-

Rugby League

Silk CIT CHALLENGE CLP Third-round drawn
Huddersfield v Eest Leads: Legh v Wigan St
Patrols or Backmack Hunslet v Wackborn Winnss
v Clegton or Saddiewarton or Electromagh; Swinton v Branney; Featherstone v Modigneer: Walefield v Olenden or Barmer Istant; Negliev v Rechill
or Wigan: Rose Bridge Deactury v West Fult Workington v Thato Headt; Central Lancateure v Hull
Dockers: Hull v Look, Lane; Barmer v Sciolat;
Rochdale v Wateley of Mothor: Carliel v Birt; York
v Dudley Hill or Deustrum Moor; Dorigester v Outon or West Bouting, Battley v Prescot; Whatelsaen
v Sartaugh; Hull h R v York Acom or Mayfeld.
Ties to the played off 25/26 January 1997.

Rugby Union

Rugby Union
Milan. the Italian champions, yesterday
signed the former New Zealand No 8,
Richard Turner, from North Harbour.
EMERGING WALES (v Scotland A. Friday 17
January): 17 Thomas Caroff, 6 Evens (Linetis,
L. Devics (Cardiff), N Device (Liarets, coo), D
James (Bridgend), L Janus (Cardiff), A Noore
(Richmond), N Eynon (Pontymoth), B Williams
(Neath), S John (Liarets), V Cooper (Liarets),
P Arrold (Sewanses), A Gibbs (Liarets), C Wystz (Lianets), N Thomas (Bath), Replacements: Leads (Pontymoth), B Highward (Ebow
Vote), H Harries (Harfequers), L Johns (Cardiff),
A Lewis (Cardiff), R McBryde (Lianets).
WALES UNDER-21, V Scotland Under-21, Fri-WALES UNDER-21 (v Scotland Under-21, Fri-day 17 January): G Tremala (Unw of Wales In-strue. Carairi), R Shorney (UNIC), J Frianel? (Neath, T Davins (Lancis), G Wyatz (Port)snot).

> TODAY'S NUMBER

> > 6

The age in months of the new player-manager of a village football club in eastern Romania. Aurel Rusu, owner of the Sadcom team from Caragele, wants his son, Lucian, to become "a great player", so he decided to "introduce him early into sports".

S Coaner (Newport), D Haudins (Neath, capt), P Booth/Cardiff, J Ri Davey (Cross keys), S Gardiner (Neath), N Wooldes (Neath, A Device (UWC), H Jenkins (Limell), M Williams (Portypords), Replacements: G Downes (Bridgerd), J Cottlerley (Nexport), D Morris (Neath), G Thomas (Reng Neath), J Griffithe (Swarsea), D Thomas (Swarsea).

Onuora starts a four-match han

for his second sending-off this

season, at Burnley last month.

and Leo Fortune-West is still re-

who is likely to pair Dennis Bai-

ley and Steve Butler in attack,

insists: "We are looking for an-

other big cup result to get us go-

ing again in the league."

Yet the manager, Tony Pulis,

covering from a broken leg.

Tennis

Stafford (SA) to J. Bursto (SD) 6-0 6-1 3-0 rate. T DNOWST (Swee) by N. Porrous (Nert) 6-1 6-2 6-4; M. GLSTAPSSCN (Swee) by 8 DONE (June) 6-7 6-3 7-5 6-1; C. Moya (Sp) to 8 DCDAPR (Seet) 5-7 6-3 4-6 5-1 6-4; M. MISTER (June) for Grant (JSD) 6-8 6-5 6-1 6-1; C. Moya (Sp) to D. Veccet (JC Rep) 6-8 6-6 5; J. Parenarian (Fr) by 1-4 Mass (Mor) 1-5 6-0 6-5; J. Parenarian (Fr) by 1-4 Mass (Mor) 1-7 6-6 6-6; J. Parenarian (SD) to A Proper (Ren) 7-5 6-2 6-4; D. Morrous (JSD) to A Proper (Ren) 1-6 6-2 6-4; D. Morrous (JSD) to A Proper (Ren) 1-6 6-2 6-4; D. Morrous (JSD) to A Morrous (Ren) 1-6 6-2 6-4; D. Morrous (JSD) to A Morrous (Ren) 1-6 6-2 6-4; D. Morrous (JSD) to A Morrous (Ren) 1-6 6-2 6-4; D. Morrous (JSD) to A Morrous (Ren) 1-6 6-2 6-4; D. Morrous (JSD) to A Morrous (JSD) 1-6 6-2 6-4; D. Morrous (JSD) to A Morrous (JSD) 1-6 7-5 7-6 3-6 8-4; J. Mittenschial (JSD) 1-6 7-5 7-6 3-6 8-4; J. Mittenschial (JSD) 1-6 5-7 7-6 8-2 6 Morrous (JSD) 1-6 Morrous (JSD) 1-7 Mass (JSD) 1-7 Morrous (JSD) 1-

Snow reports

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Martyn's return

Leeds goalkeeper back at old club in FA Cup, page 21

Hall makes Herculean attempt to lure Robson

Football

Newcastle United were last night believed to be making a last-ditch attempt to lure Bobby Robson to St James' Park. with a high-level meeting scheduled for Barcelona's Nou Camp Stadium.

The Newcastle chairman, Sir John Hall, a keen supporter of Robson, was said to be leading the negotiations for the former England manager's release with

the Spanish club's president, Jose Luis Nunez.

Robson and his Portuguese advisor Jose Vega, who acts as agent for the Middlesbrough midfielder Emerson, were also reported be attending the meeting which was to follow last night's league match against Hercules,

It is understood that Newcastle are so eager to have Robson that they are prepared to buy out his contract, which has nearly two years to run.

The Barcelona coach has resisted efforts to tempt him home, but what might tip the scales in Hall's favour is that Robson's relationship with Nunez has cooled considerably in the past week.

The 63-year-old former Ipswich manager is seen by Newcastle as the figurehead of a managerial dynasty, with Peter Beardsley eventually taking over and in turn handing the reins on to Alan Shearer. Robson has indicated that he

Newcastle sont a delegation to Spain as soon as Keegan's resignation became public

his man,

should he leave Spain. He fol-

lowed Robson when he left

would like to take his assistant, knowledge. They met Robson Jose Mourinho, with him at his villa in Sitges where he was Jose Mourinho, with him offered offered a five-year deal on a similar salary to Barcelona. where he earns around £600.000 a year.

Despite Kenny Dalglish's being a strong candidate. Robson Back on Tyneside, Pavel Srhas remained the No 1 target nicek added to the post-Keegan and Hall has continually interturmoil by asking for a transfer. rupted his winter break at his The Czech goalkeeper, who Marbella retreat to try to secure delivered his request in writing to the caretaker managers, Terry McDermott and Arthur Cox, said he had no option but to ask to go for the sake of his family

after being dropped for the fifth time in his Newcastle ca-

Everybody knows what I think of of the fans and this area, and the same goes for my family too, so this is a very sad day for me." Smicek said.

"But at this stage of my career I need to be playing first-team football and I've come to the conclusion that it's time for me to make a move and look for a new team.

One of Keegan's last man-

agerial decisions was to drop the nothing against Shaka. This is 28-year-old Smicek - a E350,000 signing by Jim Smith from Banik Ostrava in 1991 once again, with Shake Hislop taking over for the last three

games of his reign. But Smicek, whose contract runs out at the end of next season, made it clear that his decision to make a formal transfer request was not related to Hislop or to Keegan's resignation. "This has nothing to do with Shaka or anything else: I've got

I need to be playing first team football to keep my place in the Czech team for the World Cup qualifiers. Hopefully, I'll be able to find another team in the

about me, he said.

Premiership If not I'm willing to go anywhere in Europe. Alex Ferguson, the Man-chester United manager, is hoping to sign the Israeli centre-back Gadi Bromer, for £1.3m from Maccabi Tel Aviv

Becker makes heated exit

Tennis

DERRICK WHYTE reports from Melbourne

Competitors in the Australian Open are used to feeling the heat and on yesterday's evidence they can expect a long, hot fortnight ahead. As the temperatures soared to well over 100F on court here, the victims of the hot sun included the defending champion, Boris Becker, and Greg Rusedski. Britain's No 2.

The man who displaced Rusedski at the top of the British rankings. Tim Henman. found his feet sticking to the court surface, but the new world No 14 is a cool customer these days and he enjoyed a comfortable straight-sets victory.

The day began with Henman confirming his rise up the world order (Roger Taylor, who reached No 11, is the only Briton who has achieved a higher ranking) following his 6-3, 6-1 victory on Saturday over Carlos Moya in the final of the Sydney International.

Moya rarely looked capable of winning that match and the quality of Henman's performance was underlined vesterday when the Spaniard claimed Becker's scalp. A gruelling fiveset battle on Centre Court that lasted more than three and a half hours ended with Moya winning 5-7, 7-6, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Becker appeared to have the match under control as he built up a two sets to one lead. Moya, 20, replied with a succession of precise passing shots, rapid service returns and win-ning lobs which won him the next set and left Becker cursing with frustration. The German's game was erratic throughout. He served almost as many double faults as aces and failed to

show any of his normal mastery at the net.

The first holder of the title to go out in the first round since Roscoe Tanner in 1977, Becker said: "My brain is scrambled eggs right now. I'm really strug-gling to speak normally be-cause I'm burning, especially my feet and legs. There were times that I couldn't move at all because I was afraid I would lose the skin on my feet."

It is not the first time that Becker has been an early loser in Melbourne. After winning the tournament in 1991, he was knocked out in the third round the following year and in the first round of the 1993 and 1995 tournaments.

Becker's absence will improve the chances of both the favourite. Pete Sampras, and the world No 2, Michael Chang, who beat the Belgian Kris Goossens 6-0, 6-3, 6-1 vesterday. The only person to feel the heat in this match was a ball-girl who fainted, Chang coming to the rescue with a cold towel.

If they win their next matches Chang and Henman will meet in the third round. The Briton had few problems as he recorded his 10th win in 11 matches by beating the Romanian qualifier Andrei Pavel 7-5, 6-4, 6-2. Henman now plays Guillaume Raoux tomorrow. The Frenchman won their only previous meeting, but is now ranked 82 in the world. Rusedski suffered dehydration

and lost 4-6, 7-5, 5-7, 6-2 to the 14th seed. Felix Mantilla. At one stage Rusedski incurred a time violation when, looking as if he was going to pass out. he asked for some water. Rusedski said: "I was dehydrated by the middle of the second set and by the end of it I was completely exhausted" Results, Sporting Digest,

Boris Becker slips to a five-set defeat against Carlos Moya in the Australian Open yesterday

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Sink ship which carries coal

Monday's Solution

5 Food found by one in grassy highland peak? (5.4) In a car crash this may be

applied to bruise (6) They play very very sound-A bit of common sense

keeps a record non-digital? 16 A cry for help to secure optimum in lagging material

18 Model changes nice, essentially harmonious (7) 19 One giving praise about new wash (7)

One Member of Parliament in study is wet (6) 23 A name's given support. uplifting to backer of play

Graf gains little satisfaction

failed to get the first-round warm-up she was hoping for, her Slovak opponent Janette Husarova collapsing on court and forfeiting with a knee injury 22 minutes into their match with the German leading 5-1 yesterday.

The delay in treating Husarova prompted Graf to call for an increase in the number of physiotherapists on duty at major

"It did take a while for someone to come out." Graf said. "Another physiotherapist would be helpful at the beginning of a big tournament like this. Graf took matters into her

The women's top seed at the own hands by taking a handful Romania's Ruxandra Dragomir Australian Open, Steffi Graf. of ice cubes to help treat 4-6, 6-3, 10-8. Husarova's injury.

> The physics are extremely busy in there [the dressing rooms] and injuries are occur-ring a lot more," said Graf, who is chasing her fifth Australian Open title after missing the last vo years because of injury.

Husarova, a 22-year-old from Bratislava, was trailing Graf 5-1 when her knee buckled under the strain of trying to change direction quickly at the

Two women's seeds were eliminated on the first day, including 11th seed Judith Wiesner, of Austria, who lost to

The unseeded 1995 champion, Mary Pierce of France, 22 tomorrow and on the comeback trail after two years of injury problems, ousted the Russian 13th seed. Elena Likhovtseva 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 although not before squandering four match points.

"I'm just working hard every day, I feel I'm getting better and better and I don't think I have anything to prove to myself or anybody. said Pierce after her 2hr 5min victory. The third seed Conchita Martinez, of Spain, opened her campaign with a 6-0, 6-2 win over Miriam Oremans, of the Netherlands.

Epruc threat to England

Rugby Union DAVID LLEWELLYN

Representatives of the English Professional Rugby Union Clubs and Twickenham officials were frantically arranging for an urgent meeting last night to try to saleguard England's

Five Nations campaign. A meeting of both teams of negotiators is to be set up within the next 48 hours at which the Rugby Football Union will be asked to explain why a perfectly valid set of clauses in what has come to be known as the Leicester Agreement underwent changes before going for

signing by the 24 member clubs

of Eprue. Failure to satisfy the

clubs in the matter could result for signing by 20 January, have in players being withheld from the national squads.

One Eprue official, Charles Levison of Wasps, described the non-release of players by the clubs as "a very real threat". According to Northampton's millionaire backer, Keith Barwell. the redrafted agreement makes no mention of a non-voting player's representative on the board of the proposed new governing hody of the club game. Newco, and that a clause allowing members of the board to stand for one

year only was introduced. But according to one member of the RFU's team any differences between the Leicester Agreement and the version that has been sent out to clubs

to be put down to errors on the part of the legal team drawing up the agreement. The signs are that peace will

break out again; but there were worried frowns all round until late vesterday, when placatory noises issued from both sides. "There is no question of not having a players' representative on the heard of Newco," said an RFU source. And evidence that Enruc are equally eager to overcome this latest little niggle came when the Leicester president. Peter Wheeler, a director of Eprue, said: "I've spoken to most of the RFU negotiating team and their lawyers and I am fairly happy that they wish that documentation to refleet the agreement."

Aberdeen aim to identify to identify fally in days 'moronic' fans, theets

Aberdeen fans who tainted a minute's silence for the former Rangers player George Young, who died last Friday aged 74, were yesterday exposed by fellow supporters.

It emerged that those who marred the tribute to Young on Sunday were, according to wit-nesses among the 1,000-strong travelling support in the Glas-gow ground's Broomloan Stand, in fact "celebrating" the 1971 Ibrox Disaster when 66 fans died.

Neil McDougall, a former chairman of the Aberdeen Supporters' Association, said: When I heard a minority start to sing about the Ibrox Disaster. I put my fingers in my ears, shut my eyes and prayed for the minute to end I have never been so ashamed in all my life. Those morons have left all Dons fans tarred with the same brush."

The current Supporters' Association chairman, Roddie Arnott, labelled the outburst "indicative of a general de-cline" in crowd behaviour. "I can only apologise to Rangers and the family of George Young for what was absolutely disgraceful behaviour," he added. Condemnation was wide-

ranging after Rangers manager Walter Smith had called it "the worst I can ever remember" and the Aberdeen chairman. Ian Donald, issued a plea to true fans to finger the guilty minority. Donald issued a statement

yesterday which read: "It goes without saying that Aberdeen iour of a small minority of so-

called fans yesterday.

and some people must be aware of those who did not.

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"If anyone does have infor mation which may help finding these people, I would urge them to contact the club. Any information received will be treated in strictest confidence." Last month, Aberdeen

threatened to ban supporters who threw missiles at the Rangers team coach outside Pittodrie a few minutes after a match. The bus was undamaged and nobody hurt. So far the culprits have not been traced. Arnott does not believe the Ibrox incident was connected to

the bad feeling which persists when the two clubs meet despite a string of recent incidents. "I don't think it was down to that on this occasion." he said. "Lisimply think it was a lack of reb spect which shows a general decline in standards. "It used to be years ago

when a minute's silence was held it was exactly that. All you could hear was traffic outside the ground or somebody coughing. I would hate to think this incident had anything to do with the Rangers and Aberdeen fixture. I wasn't there myself but friends who were there say it was only 10 or 20 fans who shamed themselves.

"I can think of no explanation as to why someone football Club does not condone—shouldn't show some respect for in any way the mindless behav- someone who has died. Perhaps what we need to get over to these people is how would they "On behalf of the club. I feel if it was their relative's fuwould like to apologise unre-neral and something like this servedly to Rangers Football happened."

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